AMERICA'S NEW MAGAZINE OF POPULAR ENTERTAINMENT

Mediascene

MAY – JUNE $1.50

WHO IS THIS MAN AND WHAT DOES HE HAVE IN COMMON WITH DICK TRACY, MANDRAKE, THE PHANTOM, CAPTAIN MARVEL, SPY SMASHER, CAPTAIN MIDNIGHT, BLACKHAWK, BUCK ROGERS, SMILIN' JACK, THE LONE RANGER, CAPTAIN AMERICA, THE GREEN HORNET, RED RYDER, SUPERMAN, TIM TYLER, RED BARRY, NYOKA AND TERRY? HE'S ONE OF THE

SCREEN AVENGERS

THIS ISSUE!

A SUPERGRAPHICS PUBLICATION

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publisher and editor
STERANKO
associate editor
KEN BRUZENAK
correspondents
BOB GLAT
ERIC HOFFMAN
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MEDIASCENE

If you're a subscriber to **Mediascene**, you're probably wondering why this issue is late.

The answer, in a word, is **Chandler.**

As revealed in the last issue of **Mediascene**, I was about to undertake the job of producing my first graphic story in over five years.

Chandler is really more than just a story. It is a movie-length visual novel, my first, and it is being published by Pyramid Books in August.

As readers will remember, a certain portion of my life and work was spent writing and illustrating for Marvel Comics—with characters such as Captain America and Nick Fury, Agent of SHIELD. Though my work on those titles was confined to the late 1960's, it is a rare week, indeed that has no inquiring mail from comic readers who still comment on the old books, and inquire about my return to the Marvel mighty bullpen. "When are you going to do comics again?" they ask.

Time has changed many things since the late 60's, including my priorities and my artistic projects. But my interest in comics (or more specifically my interest in the visual telling of stories) has not diminished. If anything, it has only increased. This was, of course, only one of the reasons that I agreed to do **CHANDLER** for Byron Preiss' new Fiction Illustrated series.

The reasons are incidental to the fact that during the past few months, all my time and energy were devoted to creating a new character, a new format and a new style to fulfill that commitment. **CHANDLER** has been completed and will be released in two editions (as a digest-sized book and in a large deluxe edition) this summer. All this, of course, to answer the numerous fans who have written to implore (and often demand) my return to visual storytelling. In addition, a personal thanks to everyone who has taken the time to comment on my work. Your letters have helped make some of the most difficult and trying moments worthwhile.

CHANDLER may be considered a landmark book in several areas. The art, for example was completed entirely in pencil instead of being finished in ink as is almost all linear art for high-speed reproduction. There have been other illustrated stories drawn in pencil, but they were always reproduced in half-tone. I developed a completely new system for *CHANDLER*, one which is being utilized here for the very first time. In addition, the art was drawn the same size that it appears in the deluxe edition, breaking the tradition by which original art was always completed half again or twice the size it would eventually appear in printed form.

The reasons for both these directions were arrived at from a practical point of view—simply that the deadline was too tight to handle the job any other way; there was no time to draw it oversize or to ink it. Necessity proved to be the mother of invention, and the result may be an improvement over the old inking system.

Tight deadlines enhance spontaniety in art, but eliminate polish. In the case of **CHANDLER**, almost the first idea that came into range had to be put on paper. In the almost 250 illustrations used in the book, only three were done over. Essentially, **CHANDLER** was a six month job done in two!

No artist is ever satisfied with his work, and I'm certain **CHANDLER** will be no different to my eye. At this writing, the original art (without coloring and text) was exhibited at the New York Comic Art Convention where it seemed to receive unanimous approval, even by the most hard-nosed professionals—a very hopeful sign. The final word, however, rests with the public—and the book's ultimate acceptance or rejection will be a question mark until late this year. As always, I still anticipate your comments and criticism with great interest.

CHANDLER, as I explained last issue, was created in the image of Sam Spade and Philip Marlowe, and is, in a way, my tribute to the tough, tenement foot-on-the-dash, .45-under-the-arm private eye that has since become affectionately known as the hard-boiled dick. **CHANDLER** is evocative of the 1930's and 40's detective films such as **The Maltese Falcon, Murder My Sweet, Laura, Out of the Past, The Best Cannar, Double Indemnity, The Big Sleep, While the City Sleeps, The Killers** and **This Gun for Hire.**

With the completion of **CHANDLER**, this issue of **MEDIASCENE** was next on the schedule—and one that I've been looking forward to for quite a while. As an individual who grew up with the serials (and can still enjoy watching them today), I felt the subject matter was and would manifest itself with our format. With that in mind, I called upon an old friend, Eric Hoffman, who just happens to be an expert on the subject of vintage movies and chapterplays.

He liked the idea, and the result of his labors became the basis of this issue. As planned, Eric confined his essay to the serials inspired by characters taken from the comics, another area close to the Hoffman heart.

Eric was originally a New Yorker who found himself displaced in sunny California at age 10. Like most of us, he grew up with the images of Flash Gordon, Superman and The Shadow (for years, Eric says, he thought he knew what evil lurked in the hearts of men). He adopted films as an avocation, and over the years became acquainted with many of the people responsible for making those films.

Living just a stone's throw from Hollywood hasn't hurt much either, and he frequently finds himself being consulted on matters cinematic. In the last few years, he's written for **Serial World** and **Those Enduring Matinee Idols**, in addition to being a staffer of Marvel's **Monsters of the Movies**. He is currently lecturing on film at California colleges and working on several screenplays.

I met Eric in 1971 at a California convention where he had assembled the film program. He was showing his "most rare" (a collection of some of the best action footage culled from a dozen or two serials) to an audience of several hundred movie buffs. Close to the end of the film, Eric leaned over and whispered, "Watch this!" The last few minutes of footage was from the opening chapter of **S-Man Never Forget.** Clayton Moore (the Lone Ranger without his mask) was riding through the Holland Tunnel on a motorcycle when one of his opponents diabolically opened a gate which allowed the Atlantic Ocean to flood the tubes. Moore rocketed through the tunnel just ahead of the tidal wave. The audience was breathless as the surge of water gained explosively on the cyclist. Suddenly, in a full forward view, a wall of water engulfed the rider—then, "Next Week, Chapter Two!!"

I have never seen a live lynch mob, but that moment was about as close as I ever hope to come to one. They rose as a man, shooting threats of violence at Hoffman for doing this to them. He was as calm as a man who just discovered immortality as he leaned over again and said, "It happens every time I run this reel!"

You'll find Eric's feature, *The Screen Avengers*, to be factual and funny, full of personal observations about the Great Comic Heroes on the screen. It's a definitive piece on the subject, one you'll want to save—and read again.

The pictorial material used to illustrate the feature came from several sources. Eric supplied a stack of photos from his personal files, but we opted for the best selection possible and contacted Alan Barbour, author of dozens of film reference books including **Days of Thrills and Adventure** and **The Thrill of It All.** He supplied over a hundred more stills from which we chose those reproduced in these pages. Al Levine supplied the centerspread poster after being bribed with a possible plug in **MEDIASCENE.** Those interested in acquiring movie memorabilia such as the material seen in this issue, may send for Levine's poster catalog ($1.00) and previews catalog ($1.00) to PO Box1 Bloomfield NJ/07003. There are hundreds of listings from one of the largest collections in the country—and the catalog fees are refundable.

Joe Kubert is one of the real superstars in the comic business. I've known Joe for quite a few years, and during that time our conversations would frequently focus on the idea of a place where young artists could go for guidance and training. Kubert's dream has just become a reality. Last September, I met him in Dover, New Jersey to look over a building he had found which seemed to suit all the requirements Joe had set for an art school. The structure and grounds were impressive, but even more impressive were the plans and the personnel he had gathered to teach there. Since there is no other school like it in the country (and few really great artists who are willing to undertake the rigors of teaching) Kubert's school seems assured of unqualified success. Joe tells all about it in this issue.

If our plans begin to materialize in the usual way, the next issue of **MEDIASCENE** will be our biggest and most spectacular yet. We've been mapping out a special *Sword and Sorcery* issue for about a year—and its time has come. To give you a quick preview of what might be expected, look for art by Neal Adams, Alex Nino, Alfredo Alcala, Marcos Boso, Rudy Nebres and others—including a new illustration by Barry Smith, an incredible battle scene of Conan, drawn expressly for **MEDIASCENE**, easily the finest and most exciting visualization of the character he's ever done. There may even be a few pieces of Steranko art turning up within the pages of that issue.

That publication will also feature the announcement of a new line of prints which we guarantee to be a *major event of 1976*. We can only say it involves several of the most expensive and sought after works of art you've seen in ages.

Hope you'll be there. 'Til then, take care.●

STERANKO

MEDIASCENE BACK ISSUES

No. 1 — Power packed premiere issue on DOC SAVAGE. Illustrated versions of Doc by Mike Ploog, Gene Colan, Don Adkins, Marie Severin and Steranko. Big Doc Savage art-ticle spotlights the Man of Bronze. News and reviews, capped off by pulp and comic reproductions. Full page Shadow presentation piece by Steranko.

No. 2 — Special CAPTAIN MARVEL issue, featuring the story behind Beck's reunion with the Big Red Cheese, illustrated with photos of artists and writers from the 40's and the 70's. Beck's Big Von Marvel specials, along with articles on the Spider pulps. Krupp underground comix and an affidavit and authority, all superimposed on Steranko.

No. 3 — Haunting HORROR COMICS issue, from EC to the Marvel black and whites to the underground. All discussed and dissected in a definitive article, illustrated with details of vintage horror comic covers. "Frogs," the overdone, innovative graphic story by Steranko, appears in the centerspread. Pictorial feature on Horror Pulps.

No. 4 — DRUGS AND THE COMICS is the theme of this special issue that examines the role of comics and drug usage. The controversial 8-page anti-drug story "The Black," by Steranko highlights this issue, along with the story behind its creation. Plus more news, articles, features, and behind-the-scenes editorial by Steranko.

No. 5 — Special SWORD AND SORCERY issue. Giant double-size issue featuring news, articles and art. Never before published illustrations by Ahearn, de la Fuente, Smith, Roberts, Kirby, Steranko and others. Definitive articles on Conan and Howard. The Evolution of S&S and Retribution in the Comics, and more on the Heroic Fantasy field.

No. 6 — Big BURROUGHS issue, full of action-packed facts and graphics. An article on Burroughs of the Pulps is featured along with giant centerspread poster-maps of Barsoom. John Carter's long and fantastic career is recapped with rare pulp illustrations, Comic scenes, paperback reviews, films, records and movies fill out the package.

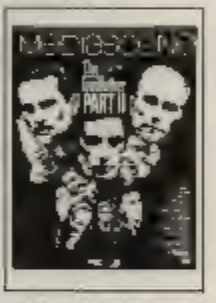
No. 7 — Colorful CRIME AND VIOLENCE issue, from Public Enemy to Magnum Force, featuring Steranko cover and centerspread paintings, interview with Jesse Kramer author Don Pendleton, writing for crime heroines by Mae Ladlow and Clint Beckwood profile. Expanded news in Sci-Fi and media to go with film change to Mediascene.

No. 8 — Pixillatin' PIN-UP issue, stacked with a special graphics history of pin-up art from comics to spectators to cinema. A Steranko tribute to Marilyn Monroe graces the centerspread, along with pin-ups from the past. Larger comics, Sci-Fi and media news are heavily illustrated with exciting graphics in a new, redesigned format.

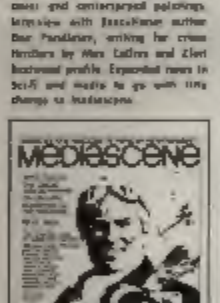
No. 9 — Amazing All-HERO issue, featuring a photo-packed layout on the filming of Doc Savage, interview with Cardos director John Guillermin, full-page map of Tarzan's Africa, Steranko centerspread of his best-known hero, Tarzan Comics, films, TV and paperback news about Comics, Flash Gordon, others fill out this heroic issue.

No. 10 — SCIENCE FICTION issue special illustrated by Williamson, Wood, Mooney, Steranko, more. Giant double-size packed with art and graphics, fantastic 6-million Dollar Man centerspread in color, SF's SF comics reminisce, Planet of the Apes, SF on TV, The Great SF Illustrators, Incredible Pulps, comics, films. A galactic blockbuster!

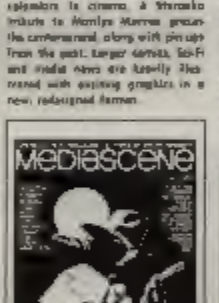
No. 11 Bold ADVENTURE issue featuring Hollywood's Monster Kids. The Return of The Pulp Heroes (Shadow, Savage, Spider); Pictorial Profile on Charles Bronson, Planet Pulps, Behind the Scenes at the National Lampoon, New, large 52-page format, expanded news sections, more vibrant color with super-sized Sword and Sorcery centerspread.



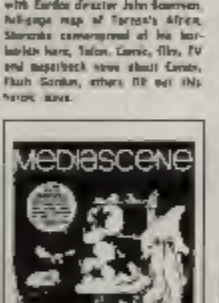
No. 12 — Big FILM issue, Special Preview of Godfather II, Roger Moore in Gold, others. Pictorial of James Bond in Nice With the Golden Gun; The Mistress of Mystery, Agatha Christie and her film Murder On The Orient Express; new movie bio of Lenny Bruce; The Gangland in Film and Fiction; colorful back-to-spread poster art covers; film,



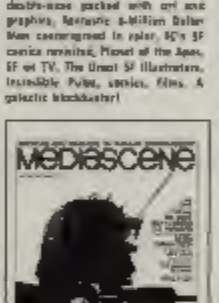
No. 13 — All ACTION issue, packed with photo coverage of the Great Middle Pepper Phantom of the Paradise, and The Legend of Billy Jack. Special feature on The Return of Sherlock Holmes with James centerspread poster in color. Pirate issue on the new Pirates, plus comic covers, paperbacks, more movie news. SF, fantasy, adventure!



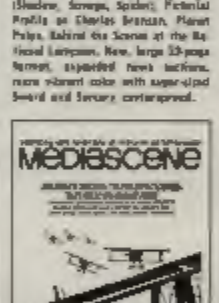
No. 14 — Powerful ALL-PULP issue, featuring the most fantastic heroes in fiction. The Secrets Behind The Shadow, written by his progeny, Walter Gibson. Spectacular color-filled centerspread introducing the Doc Savage and Shadow fan clubs; in-depth feature on the Origins of Pulp Heroes. Preview of Tarzan, Edgar Savaltine, more.



No. 15—Double-sized COMICS issue. Vaughn Bode's startling self-portrait in words and pictures, his last creative work, a penetrating look at Barry Smith, illustrated with a giant color centerspread, special feature on Jack Kirby's return to Marvel with exclusive Mediascene pin-up of Cap America. The Art of Neal Adams with a full-page Tarzan.



No. 16—Special ARTISTS issue. The full story behind the Gil Kane, Richard Corben graphic novels; Master of the Macabre, Berni Wrightson, reveals his influences and experiences in a jungle interview, Final Tribute to Vaughn Bode with an unpublished portrait by Vincent Bode, photo feature on Royal Flash, extended coverage on comics, movies.



No. 17 — Dynamite ART issue, featuring The Killer Bikes, a look at the flying knights of WWI in comics, pulps and films, with a color Steranko centerspread; Edgar Rice Burroughs centennial portfolio by Frank Frazetta; the Case Against Superman by Jerry Siegel, preview of Logan's Run; comics, films, more.

No. 18 — Panoramic PULP issue spotlighting The 50 Worst Pulps with cover reproductions; How I Paint The Shadow by Bourgeau illustrated with previously unpublished art; Behind The Mask, origins of the great Pulp Heroes; The Shadow of the Comics, introducing Chandler, an exciting, new visual novel; more.

The steranko ENCYCLOPEDIA of SUPERHEROES

To those of you who have enquired about the progress of our forthcoming publication, **THE STERANKO ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SUPER HEROES**, All orders which have been received by us to date have been processed for mailing when the Encyclopedias are finally completed. We realize that the books are long overdue, but beauty takes time to create. We guarantee you'll find them well worth the wait—and that their quality will equal our other publications in style, design and perfection.

THE SCREEN AVENGERS

PART ONE: THE BEGINNING

When a group of people interested in films get together and the subject of the serials comes up, it is more than likely that somebody will automatically mention such chapter-plays as FLASH GORDON, BUCK ROGERS, BATMAN, CAPTAIN MARVEL and the like.

To someone who really hasn't gone into the surprisingly large output of this till-recently neglected genre of the motion picture, the first thought that will pop into his head will be that of serials which have been adapted from comic strip characters.

This is no doubt due to the fact that the comic strip hero inspires a particular kind of memory, especially if that hero is of a fantastic nature. The fact that such characters have been adapted to the film medium strengthens, this identification. There are actually some people who find it difficult to believe that serials (of the sound era) had anything other than comic-strip based productions, when in actuality the comic-serials made up less than 35-40 per cent of the total output of the three companies that produced chapter plays.

Universal Pictures set the stage in 1934 when it acquired the screen rights to Hal Forrest's popular aviation-oriented strip, TAILSPIN TOMMY, and brought it to the screen as a 12-episode adventure. In that period of time, Universal's serials dealt considerably with character development, when not subjecting its heroes and heroines to whatever diabolical touches of cinematic sadism the writers could devise.

In TAILSPIN TOMMY, Maurice Murphy started as young Tommy Tompkins, Noah Beery Jr. as his pal Skeeter, Patricia Farr as Betty Lou Barnes (Tommy's girl) and action veteran Grant Withers as Mill Howe, pilot for Three Point Airlines.

The plot had Tommy, a young mechanic with an urge to fly, encountering pilot Howe when the man's ship makes a forced landing at the youngster's home town of Littleville. His arm broken, in need of a co-pilot for his journey, Howe agrees to let Tommy fly with him. Wouldn't you know it, right at the end of episode one, the plane runs into a storm. Howe is tossed about, knocked out and falls onto the controls, jamming them. Audiences left the theater wondering how young, inexperienced Tommy would pull the plane out of its tailspin (especially since he had an alarming lack of flying expertise).

The following episode found the youngster moving Howe away from the controls, pulling the plane out in time, and landing at Three Point Airfield. The rest of the adventure concerned Tommy's becoming a mechanic with the airline and helping to foil the attempts of 'Tiger' Taggart, a rival airline owner who wants to win a mail contract that Three Points is competing for.

Sabotage, aerial encounters, and even some battles on land livened things up, with an earthquake adding to the perils of Tommy and his pals in episode 9 (appropriately, if not colorfully, entitled THE EARTH GODS ROAR!).

Universal pulled almost every possible plot gimmick that would fit into the film's framework. By episode ten, Tommy was offered a film contract by a Hollywood producer-director, and became a film star as well as a hero.

John Davidson, possessing a rich baritone voice and a thoroughly suave, if sometimes slimy, aura, was well cast as 'Tiger' Taggart. Walter Miller, a veteran from the days of silent serials, in which he was always the hero, was Taggart's henchman, Bruce Hoyt, a spy in the midst of Three Point Airlines. Louis Friedlander directed the proceedings.

With the first 'Tailspin Tommy' adventure an evident money-maker, Universal decided to make a sequel, entitled TAILSPIN TOMMY IN THE GREAT AIR MYSTERY (1935). Ray Taylor replaced Louis Friedlander as director, while cast changes occurred in the main characters. Clark Williams replaced Maurice Murphy as Tommy Tompkins, while Jean Rogers, yet to make her real impact as Dale Arden, popped up as Betty Lou. Pat O'Brien, not the Warner Brothers star, was Mill Howe. In fact, the only survivors from the original group were Noah Beery Jr. as Skeeter and Charles Browne as Paul Smith, owner of Three Point Airlines.

The plot had Tommy and his friends thrown in the middle of an attempt by unscrupulous individuals to seize valuable oil property on a Latin-American island being worked by Betty Lou's uncle. In addition to the various perils, our heroes found themselves mystified by the periodic appearance of an airplane painted to look something like a huge eagle. The fact that it was capable of becoming invisible or literally vanishing into thin air added spice to the plot. By the time chapter 10 rolled around, the 'Eagle pilot' was revealed to be Mill Howe, testing out a new invention and doing his bit to look out for his young friends.

The second 'Tommy' adventure leaned towards more conventional action-adventure instead of the local boy makes good' theme that had characterized the first serial. Plenty of aerial encounters, exploding oil wells, our heroes trapped in a dungeon and even a final climax set on a cannibal island were some of the ingredients of GREAT AIR MYSTERY.

While Universal may have opened the door with its TAILSPIN TOMMY epics, the flood-gates really didn't burst until 1936. That was the year that a young actor named Larry Crabbe romped across theater screens for 13 weeks as Alex Raymond's FLASH GORDON. What happened then is film history; with his hair dyed blond (a condition Crabbe wasn't exactly mad about) and his ability to get into the spirit of the serial's ultra-fantastic plot, 'Buster' Crabbe became identified permanently with the blonde giant,' a status that remains as strong today as it was in the 1930s.

The Flash Gordon trilogy remains a perennial favorite with serial fans. Besides its rip-roaring pace and incredible characters, it marked the first time a 'science-fiction' character had achieved such popularity in the film media. For approximately twenty minutes each and every Saturday, battalions of youngsters, and adults, were able to immerse themselves in the constant battle between the conquest-hungry Emperor Ming and Flash and his cohorts.

One of the most popular (and strongest) factors in the Gordon trilogy was Flash's perennial arch-foe, Ming the Merciless. It was an inspired bit of casting that placed Charles Middleton in the role of the Fu Manchu of outer space. With his bravura style of villainy, Middleton made Emperor Ming of Mongo a heavy you not only loved to hate but actually missed a bit when he met his inevitable doom (courtesy of the writers and the Hays Office) after all of his beautifully diabolical plotting, leering, hand-wringing and scheming.

The three Gordon epics (FLASH GORDON, FLASH GORDON'S TRIP TO MARS and FLASH GORDON CONQUERS THE UNIVERSE) ran a total of 40 episodes. Within the entire trilogy, audiences had a ball watching Ming trying to conquer the Universe, destroy the Earth, kill Flash Gordon, force Dr. Zarkov to use his scientific genius to augment his plans of conquest and get winsome Dale Arden into his clutches for various unspeakable desires of his own.

While Ming had the center stage in virtually all GORDON and CONQUERS THE UNIVERSE, he had to share honors with Azura (Beatrice Roberts), ruler of Mars, in TRIP TO MARS. But even in partnership with a woman who could change people to clay or vanish and appear in a puff of smoke, Ming managed to steal the limelight with his satanic presence (heightened when he actually walked through fire!).

At the end, when FLASH GORDON CONQUERS THE UNIVERSE marked the finish of the series, Middleton was still pulling out the stops, bringing constant freshness to a role that he knew so well, a role he could have walked through in his sleep...and still made it enjoyable.

Throughout the serials, Crabbe, Middleton and Frank Shannon (who exuded sagacity, wisdom and earnestness as Dr. Zarkov, providing audiences with something of a father figure with his elderly bearing) portrayed the same characters.

Dale Arden is best remembered in the form of Jean Rogers who was menaced all the way from the first Gordon to a fate-ness-well. Racing around frantically in an outfit that looked like something out of a romantic's sea fantasy (circa the Arabian Nights), Jean Rogers was a Dale that any evil-minded, hot-blooded heavy would gleefully pursue. Even today, the sight of Dale, huddled in a corner of King Vultan's sky palace, breathing heavily as she deftly (and desperately) dodges the lecherous embraces of the hawk-king, is enough to stimulate the red corpuscles of even the most callow youth just aware of the opposite sex.

In fact, if you really think about it, the first Gordon adventure was, in a way, fairly adult for a "kid's serial," as many consider it today; there was actually more chasing going on than in most romantic films... with much more serious intent. Flash had a thing for Dale; Dale definitely had the hots for Flash; Princess Aura set her sights for Flash (who managed to resist her, even when she was played by Priscilla Lawson, complete with exotic eye-shadow and a bust-line bigger than Dale's!)

TOP: The one and only Flash Gordon. CENTER: Flash, Prince Barin (Richard Alexander) and Dr. Zarkov (Frank Shannon) attempt to revive a fallen comrade. BOTTOM: Flash with Dale Arden (Jean Rogers). OPPOSITE: In mortal combat with Ming the Merciless (Charles [redacted].

FRAZETTA 1977 A FANTASTIC NEW SWORD & SORCERY CALENDAR!

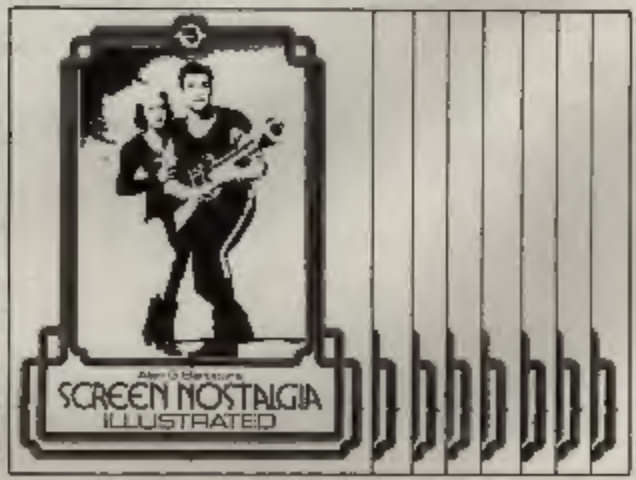
The publishing event of the year! The 1977 FRAZETTA FANTASY ART CALENDAR is a breathtaking collection of a dozen paintings WHICH DID NOT APPEAR IN THE FANTASTIC ART OF FRANK FRAZETTA! Here is an unforgettable gallery of barbarians, slave girls, savage warriors and warlocks locked in battle. Some of this art originally graced the covers of Robert E. Howard and Edgar Rice Burroughs books, and were later repainted by Frazetta to refine their impact and beauty.

12 SPECTACULAR PRINTS PLUS A GIANT DOUBLE-SIZED CONAN POSTER

In addition to 12 new oversize prints for each month of the year, the 1977 FRAZETTA FANTASY CALENDAR features a double-sized print of the painting created for CONAN THE BUCCANEER, a powerful, explosive battle scene recently repainted by Frazetta and reproduced here for the first time. THE FRAZETTA FANTASY CALENDAR will be one of the prime pieces in any collection—and after it is out of print will certainly double in price. Order yours today. $4.95 plus .55 postage and handling.

THRILLS ADVENTURE ACTION! IN EIGHT GREAT VOLUMES OF SCREEN NOSTALGIA ILLUSTRATED

If you long to return to those thrilling days of yesteryear, the days of Saturday matinees and cliffhanger serials, then SCREEN NOSTALGIA ILLUSTRATED is for you! Here are 8 new books (each 48 pages) packed from cover to cover with high-quality reproductions of stills, posters and lobby cards from the fast-action thrillers of the 30's and 40's. SNI 1 presents a panorama of posters from the great B Westerns. SNI 2 spotlights the films of Linda Stirling, the Queen of the Serials. SNI 3 features a potpourri of art and photos from the best of the character serials. SNI 4 is a B Western grab-bag packed with two-gun heroes. SNI 5 showcases a collection of serial pressbook ads and promotional material. SNI 6 contains pages selected from *The Hollywood Reporter* about the 1939–40 action films and stars. SNI 7 is a special pictorial salute to William "Wild Bill" Elliott. SNI 8 highlights a host of rare and exciting serial lobby cards. Many single pieces featured in SNI now cost more than $100 each, when they can be found. We're offering them at $5. plus .50 postage—or ALL 8 BOOKS FOR $35! *A FABULOUS SAVINGS OF $15!!* Order yours today!



With the lovability of a wolverine with rabies, Charles Middleton's Pa Stark ranked as one of the meanest serial villains to stomp across a screen; he even pulled the plug on an iron lung containing a rookie G-man.

and used every opportunity to test the Earthman's biceps; Emperor Ming drooled over Dale; Prince Barin (played by beefy but amiable Richard Alexander, later by the more continental Roland Drew) dug Aura; while various villains of alien origin took turns lusting at Dale. Poor Zarkov, too old to get in on the action, had to content himself with his test tubes and super-scientific gadgets.

Today, the erotic possibilities hinted at in FLASH GORDON have been taken to their ultimate and ridiculous extreme in the X-rated spoof FLESH GORDON.

Republic Pictures released its first comic strip serial in 1937. Based on Chester Gould's square-jawed, hook-nosed plain-clothes operative, DICK TRACY duplicated the story of the casting of Flash Gordon. Whereas Buster Crabbe became *the* cinematic embodiment of Gordon, Ralph Byrd became the perfect Tracy for film fans all over the world. Despite the fact that he did not possess the hook-nose of Gould's pen-and-ink hero (causing some people to think that actor Jack Holt might have been a possible basis for the sleuth...a suspicion Gould has denied), Byrd did possess the determined chin to help him put across his interpretation. Tracy and Byrd remained synonymous for four serials (15 episodes each), two features in the mid-40s for RKO (DICK TRACY'S DILEMMA and DICK TRACY MEETS GRUESOME) and a television series in the beginning of the 1950's shortly before his death.

Republic made some changes in the Tracy character in order to fit him into the mold for their serial concepts. Tracy's scope of authority and operations were widened; instead of a policeman, he became a crack FBI agent, even the chief of one of the agency's divisions. Pat Patton and Tess Trueheart were eliminated. Instead, Tracy's assistant was a G-man named Steve Lockwood (for the first three serials) and a secretary named Gwen Andrews (who would be played in one of the adventures by an actress named Phyllis Isley—later known as Jennifer Jones!). Junior remained for the first two stories, an orphan adopted by Tracy (evidently it didn't matter whether or not you were married, if you were a G-man!).

For the first two serials, comedy-relief was called for and the character of Mike McGurk, a bungling operative (who made audiences wonder how stringent the qualifications for the agency really were) was created. Smiley Burnette climaxed his way through the first serial and Lee Ford did the honors in Tracy #2.

Instead of the gadgets that most readers of the strip were familiar with, Tracy relied on his wits, fists, scientific and regular crime detection...and whatever the fertile minds of the scripters dreamed up for him.

DICK TRACY (1937) had Tracy battling the Spider Gang (so-called due to a spider-like mark on their victims. Richard Wentworth, (late none!) led by the Lame One, a mystery villain who always appeared as a figure muffled in an overcoat, walking with a club foot, wearing a grotesquely designed bald wig (complete with beetle brow) and making sure his back was usually to the camera. With the aid of a hunchbacked aide who doubled in brass as a mad surgical genius, the Lame One used a giant flying wing as one of his main weapons, and a little added plot twist that still remains unusual for its age. In putting together the plot, the film's four writers (two on story, two on script) gave Tracy a brother, Gordon, an attorney who is captured by the Lame One's mob and made to undergo a bit of Moloch's special surgery. Gordon becomes a new man...literally. He started out as actor Richard Beach and, for the rest of the serial, was portrayed by Carleton Young, complete with a scar on his face, a white streak in his hair, a complete inability to differentiate between right and wrong, and a positive talent for crime. The aspect of brother against brother proved to be one of the strongest aspects of the picture.

DICK TRACY RETURNS (1938) pitted Tracy against Pa Stark (played by Charles Middleton, with just as much relish as he portrayed Ming) and his five murderous sons, a family that really believed that the 'family that slays together, stays together'. With the lovability of a wolverine with rabies, Middleton's Pa Stark ranked as one of the meanest serial villains to stomp across a screen; he even pulled the plug on an iron lung containing a rookie G-man who was fighting to survive a shooting by one of Stark's sons. A true piece of villainy worthy of Chester Gould's bizarre world of crime.

DICK TRACY'S G-MEN (1939) featured that excellent character actor, Irving Pichel, giving a delicious, satanic performance as Nicholas Zarnoff, free-lance master spy, executed in the gas chamber and brought back to life by his gang, thanks to a drug that put him in a state of suspended animation. However, by the end of episode 15, Zarnoff returned to the land of the dead by unwittingly drinking from a poisoned waterhole in the middle of a desert.

TOP: the unstoppable Dick Tracy (Ralph Byrd). CENTER: Mandrake (Warren Hull) gestures hypnotically. BOTTOM: Pat Ryan (Granville Owen), Connie (Allen Jung) and Terry Lee (William Tracy) confer on a point in Terry and The Pirates.

An enemy which could be heard but not seen served as the basis for the last Tracy serial, DICK TRACY VS. CRIME INC. (1941). Tracy had his hands full with the campaign of murder and crime caused by 'The Ghost,' masked brother of 'Reckless' Reagan, a gangland czar brought to justice and executed through the efforts of Tracy and the Secret Council of Eight. In reality one of the members, the Ghost, with the aid of a machine that made him invisible, killed off the council members one by one when not doing his bit for crime (including threatening to destroy New York City with a tidal wave if not paid an incredible ransom). Potentially one of those classic villains, the Ghost lost that status via the fact that Republic did nothing to disguise his voice (in practice they were generally adept at), making it very evident that the mystery villain was distinguished-appearing Ralph Morgan. For its last episode, CRIME, INC. ended with a literal bang; a slug-fest between Tracy and the Ghost with the image printed on the film in negative and the Ghost meeting his death by electrocution on high-tension power lines, his body reappearing as a blazing outline before it fell to Earth, a burning torch.

The characters of Steve Lockwood and Gwen Andrews were missing from this final entry. Lockwood was replaced by Billy Carr (Michael Owen), a rookie G-man, while Gwen Andrews was replaced by June Chandler (Jan Wiley), daughter of one of the Ghost's victims.

Columbia Pictures made its first comic-strip origin serial in 1939. MANDRAKE THE MAGICIAN starred Warren Hull (who had made an impression appearing as the pulp hero 'The Spider' and would also portray The Green Hornet in the second Hornet serial from Universal) as the master of magic, while Al Kikume, who usually popped up as a native or denizen of tropical South Seas islands, was Lothar. In the person of Hull, Mandrake lost his moustache and didn't rely too much on his magic (dispensing entirely with his famed 'hypnotic gesture'), but still found himself in lots of trouble as he coped with the mysterious Wasp. Another of that long line of masked mystery criminals, the Wasp was using every lethal method possible to steal a radium energy machine invented by a scientist friend of Mandrake's.

Besides Lothar, Mandrake was aided by young, attractive Betty Houston (Doris Weston), daughter of the machine's inventor. She took the place of Princess Narda, the traditional damsel in distress of the Mandrake strip.

Since Columbia's serials stuck to 15 episodes per serial (with only two exceptions), MANDRAKE THE MAGICIAN was the rare difference; it ran only twelve episodes, a factor that evidently helped it to move at a pretty good pace.

The year 1940 saw Milton Caniff's popular TERRY AND THE PIRATES with William Tracy essaying the role of Terry, while Granville Owens was Pat Ryan. Allen Jung (who would become one of the familiar faces playing Japanese villains in many WW II films) was Connie, complete with studio-applied oversized ears. Victor De Camp was Big Stoop and Sheila O'Arcy appeared as a very exotic Dragon Lady who looked more like a fugitive from a Maria Montez picture than the bandit queen.

Menace in the proceedings was provided by Dick Curtis (more at home in westerns or as a gangster than in exotic robes or semi-oriental makeup), snarling 'You stupid fools' as his henchmen at the drop of a pith helmet. In his role as Fang, he was after the hidden treasure, plus a little touch of power on the side.

Unfortunately, besides the chaotic script, TERRY had its prime liability (in the opinion of many serial buffs) in the form of director James W. Horne, who seemed more at home with comedy (particularly the Laurel and Hardy epics he directed). In Horne's serials, the villains (and sometimes the heroes) did double takes, comedy would pop up at frequent intervals (sometimes unintentionally)...well, one gets the picture. Fortunately, Horne's attempt to direct comic-based serials began and ended with TERRY AND THE PIRATES.

PART TWO: FROM THE COMICS TO THE SCREEN

Back at Universal, Flash Gordon's success opened the way for further comic strip adaptations. Hot on the heels of

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: On the phone with **Red Barry** (Buster Crabbe) and Inspector Scott (Wade Botaler). It's good news for Mah Ling (Cyril Delavanti),General Kai Ling (Sidney Toler) and **Smilin' Jack** (Tom Brown). **Secret Agent X-9** (Lloyd Bridges) protects Lynn Moore (Jan Wiley) from enemy spies. BOTTOM: **Jungle Jim** (Grant Withers) trying to charm the tunic off Joan (Betty Jane Rhodes). Lora Lacey (Frances Robinson) and Professor Tyler (Al Shean) hope Tim Tyler's Luck (Frankie Thomas) holds out. **Ace Drummond** (John King) is menaced by one of the Dragon's henchmen. **Secret Agent X-9** (Scott Kolk) hushes up Shura Gnaustark (Jean Rogers) in the 1937 version. Officer Pat O'Hara (Grant Withers) is threatened at gunpoint in an early episode of **Radio Patrol**.

In 1939, Buster Crabbe switched galactic identities and became BUCK ROGERS, awakening from suspended animation inside a wrecked dirigible, only to find himself in the 21st Century with Earth under the control of super-racketeer Killer Kane.

FLASH GORDON was ACE DRUMMOND (1936), Captain Eddie Rickenbacker's ace of the skyways, portrayed by John King (later known as 'Dusty' of Monogram's RANGE BUSTERS series). With the help of Jean Rogers and Noah Beery, Jr., King romped through the wilds of Mongolia trying to unmask the mysterious Dragon, whose main purpose in life seemed to be the discovery and subsequent ownership (via foul means, naturally) of a mountain of jade discovered by Ms. Rogers' dad (C. Montague Shaw, who distinguished face and voice added a touch of class to the slam-bang doings of many serials). When he wasn't busy trying to find the mountain of jade and kill off Drummond, he was occupied with trying to destroy International Airways, a fledgling airline attempting to set up an airfield in Moegolia; a radio death ray operated by the Dragon's agents (which included Lon Chaney, Jr. in its ranks) did the job after the Dragon relayed his orders via talking prayer wheels (!).

The following year, 1937, had a bumper crop of newspaper-strip adventures. Grant Withers and Adrian Morris (who had portrayed the FIGHTING MARINES for Mascot) popped up as Pat O'Hara and Sam Maloney of the King Features strip RADIO PATROL. Through a ninety paced adventure lasting 12 episodes, Withers and Morris battled three factions who were out to steal the formula for flexible steel. The inventor, a friend of the two patrolmen, had been murdered for the secret, and the fact that the document belongs to the inventor's young son doesn't deter a ruthless industrialist and his henchmen, a phony Egyptian representative with hypnotic powers, and a girl and her brother (who claim the formula was stolen from them) from trying to get the secret into their hot little hands.

Withers then turned in his policeman's uniform for a pith helmet and explorer's kit to portray Alex Raymond's JUNGLE JIM. Aided by Raymond Hatton, Withers coped with the perils of the jungle, hostile natives, a couple of fortune-hunting heavies, a fugitive criminal known as the Cobra (Henry Brandon) and his partner Shanghai Lil (Evelyn Brent) and various denizens of the dark continent. Prime target of the serial's skullduggery was a young lady known as the Lion Goddess (played by Betty Jean Rhodes), who, in true serial tradition, was a missing heiress. As the various baddies attempted to capture the girl or do her in, she wound up falling in love with the dashing Jungle Jim by the final reel.

Another Alex Raymond character, SECRET AGENT X-9, came to life in the person of Scott Kolk, flashing the badge of the famed agent as he attempted to protect some crown jewels from a notorious but unknown international gem thief known as 'Brenda' (with a name like that, no wonder the guy stayed hidden!). Jean Rogers was one of the many suspects, but 'Brenda' was finally unmasked as good old, reliable Henry Brandon, who seemed to be making a career of portraying screen villains.

TIM TYLER'S LUCK rounded out 1937, with Frankie Thomas starring as Lyman Young's teen hero, seeking his anthropologist father, a man who could talk to the animals before Dr. Dolittle... in this case, Gorillas. Heroine Frances Robinson was not only attractive but got right into the thick of things as she hunted the jungle for the serial's main heavy, notorious killer Spider Webb, leading his men in a deadly search for the legendary Elephant's Burial Ground and a fortune in ivory. Norman Willis made Webb one of the truly cold-blooded villains of the old, unrepentant school. William Benedict and Jack Mulhall were two of Tim Taylor's allies in the Ivory Patrol, a jungle police force.

Buster Crabbe did double serial duty in 1938. In circles, he became RED BARRY, attempting to solve the riddle of the Chinatown Murders and recover a fortune in bonds. He then returned in his familiar guise of Flash Gordon for FLASH GORDON'S TRIP TO MARS.

In 1939, Crabbe switched galactic identities and became BUCK ROGERS, awakening from suspended animation inside a wrecked dirigible, only to find himself in the 21st Century with Earth under the control of super-racketeer Killer Kane (played with relish by Anthony Warde, one of the many reliable, yet underrated, screen rogues). Naturally Buck allies himself with the good guys, the citizens of the Hidden City. Constance Moore was Wilma Deering, C. Montague Shaw appeared as scholarly Dr. Huer and Jackie Moran was Buck's young sidekick Buddy Wade. (Likewise a refugee from the 20th Century, it is interesting to note that Warde's sequences as Kane were shot in one day; budgets were tight then and serials were either being taken for granted at the studio or not doing as well as they used to.

TOP: Don Winslow (Don Terry) throws a protective arm around 'Misty' Gaye (Anne Nagel). CENTER: The Lone Ranger (Lee Powell) gives warning to Tonto (Chief Thundercloud). BOTTOM: Townfolk ashley back as Red Ryder (Don Barry) strides forward in grim determination.

Comic-strips were left untapped until 1942 and DON WINSLOW OF THE NAVY, based on character created by LT. Comm. Frank V. Martinek. Portrayed by Don Terry, Comm. Winslow was a truly military-looking hero, with an excellent sidekick in the person of Walter Sande as Lt. Red Pennington. As per the popular comic strip, Winslow and his friend were pitted against the espionage operations of the Scorpion (Kurt Katch). The Scorpion, however, was reduced to something of a side-line figure, relaying orders once each episode to his chief lieutenant in the Pacific, M-22 (a.k.a. Spencer Martin), via television. John Litel really dispensed the orders and plotted the dirty work as Martin, while Claire Dodd and Anne Nagel provided feminine interest as the heroes' girl-friends, Mercedes Colby and 'Misty' Gaye.

In the past, the enemy was never really indentified in serials of a military nature. But with the ADVENTURES OF SMILIN' JACK, all that was changed. Tom Brown was Zack Mosley's hero with the infectious grin (minus the distinctive moustache), battling Japanese saboteurs, under the leadership of an Axis Spy master known as Fraulein Von Teufel Rose Hobart), who was aided by Turhan Bey, as Kapayama, leader of the murderous Black Samurai espionage group.

The gimmick for this epic was the secret of a road between China and India, known only to the governor of a Chinese province.

Tom Brown was aided by Marjorie Lord and Edgar Barrier (as Janet Thompson and her brother Tommy, an agent in the Australian Secret Service) as well as ever-reliable Kaye Luke as a Chinese officer. Others in the cast included Sidney Toler (of Charlie Chan fame), Philip Ahn and Cyril Delevanti.

In 1943, Don Winslow returned, loaned out by the Navy to our Coastal defenses and became DON WINSLOW OF THE COAST GUARD. Don Terry and Walter Sande repeated their roles as Winslow and Red, while, unlike the past serial, the Scorpion made a better showing in the form of Nestor Paiva, getting into the thick of things with the aid of June Duprez (remembered as the princess of the Conrad Veidt-Sabu classic, THE THIEF OF BAGDAD) and assorted Axis heavies. Elyse Knox was cast as Mercedes Colby and Edgar Dearing was Winslow's aide and liason with the Coast Guard as our heroes battled the Scorpion's sabotage activities for the Axis on the home front instead of the Pacific.

Universal's final comic-strip serial appeared in 1945, a second version of SECRET AGENT X-9, with Lloyd Bridges as Phil Corrigan, aided by Jan Wiley and Keye Luke. The action was set on Shadow Island, a privately owned hunk of land run as a sanctuary for wanted men, and a crossroads for spies of all nations, by Cy Kendall. On the island, X-9 and his partners find themselves in constant danger as they searched for the secret of 722, an explosive formula that was a dud as a liquid but, when mixed with distilled water, became a perfect substitute for high-test aviation fuel! Also trying to secure the formula was Japanese spy-mistress Victoria Horne, her various henchmen, and Kendall himself. Adding to the plethora of characters who popped up at the drop of a hat was Samuel S. Hinds, as Gale, manager of Kendall's saloon/headquarters on the island, whose sole occupation, besides knowing everything that was going on, seemed to be a never-ending game of tiddly-winks.

SECRET AGENT X-9 proved to be one of Universal's last serials. The studio ended its chapter-play run of 144 serials (both silent and sound) with the slow-paced MYSTERIOUS MR. M in 1946.

While the Dick Tracy serials proved to be successful ventures for Republic Pictures, the studio did not come out with a full-fledged comic-strip follow-up until 1940. Once could argue that the studio's two Lone Ranger chapter-plays (THE LONE RANGER—1938. THE LONE RANGER RIDES AGAIN—1939) fit into the comic-strip category, but it must be remembered that, in reality, the serials dealing with 'the Ranger Who Rides Alone' were credited to the radio program predominantly; a series of books and the successful comic strip were follow-ups to the phenomenal success of a program that has become a legend of this century's entertainment media.

In 1940, Republic took Fred Harmon's tall-in-the saddle range hero, Red Ryder, and brought it to the screen in a 12 chapter screenplay entitled, appropriately, ADVENTURES OF RED RYDER. For the part of Red, the studio cast Don Barry; on first glance, Barry was an odd choice to portray the newspaper hero. He was definitely shorter than

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15-THE SHADOW (1938)
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21-THE WHISTLER (1948)
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Side B Quiet Suicide
22-SHERLOCK HOLMES: RATHBONE (1945)
Side A Grave Gondolfo
Side B Manor House Case
23-SHERLOCK HOLMES: RATHBONE (1943)
Side A Gunpowder Plot
Side B The Speckled Band
24-SHERLOCK HOLMES: RATHBONE (1939)
Side A Missing Submarine Plans
Side B Scandal in Bohemia
25-MERCURY THEATER: WELLES (1938)
Side A Sherlock Holmes
Side B Sherlock Holmes Conclusion
26-MERCURY THEATER: WELLES (1938)
Side A Dracula Part I
Side B Dracula Part II
27-SAM SPADE (1947-48)
Side A Bow Window Caper
Side B Dry Martini Caper
28-SHADOW OF FU MANCHU (1939's)
Side A Chapters 1 and 2
Side B Chapters 3 and 4
29-SHADOW OF FU MANCHU (1939's)
Side A Chapters 5 and 6
Side B Chapters 7 and 8

MAGICIAN HEROES

30-BLACKSTONE (1945)
Side A Death Defying Death Curse of Rafi
Side B Death in the Crystal Knife From the Dark
31-CHANDU, THE MAGICIAN (1948)
Side A Chapters 1 and 2
Side B Chapters 3 and 4

ADVENTURE HEROES

32-CAPTAIN MIDNIGHT (1940, 41 & 42)
Side A Origin of Cap and Secret Squadron
Side B Ivan Shark and French Commandos
33-BUCK ROGERS (1939)
Side A Programs 1 and 2
Side B Programs 3 and 4
34-LONE RANGER (1938)
Side A Big Bandy Mine
Side B El Diablo and the Preacher
35-GREEN HORNET (1939 & 46)
Side A Parking Lot Shakedowns
Side B Escape for Revenge

MYSTERY

36-SUSPENSE: JAMES CABNEY (1948)
Side A Love's Lovely Counterfeit
Side B Conclusion
37-SUSPENSE (1945-46)
Side A House on Cypress Canyon
Side B Drury's Range, Karloff
38-LIGHTS OUT (1938 & 42)
Side A Cat Wife, Karloff
Side B Sub-Basement Monster

SCIENCE FICTION

39-TOM CORBETT (1952)
Side A Greatest Show in Universe
Side B Greatest Show in Universe II
40-SPACE PATROL (1950)
Side A Monster from the Past
Side B Watchmen of Warmuk
41-2000 PLUS (1950)
Side A When World's Meet
Side B Flying Saucers

SAMPLERS

42-SUPERHERO SAMPLER 1940-43)
Side A Black Hood 'Black Castle
Side B The Blue Beetle
43-WESTERN SAMPLER (1937-47)
Side A Buck Jones- Gene Autry
Side B Tennessee Ind. Tom Mix
44-AVIATION SAMPLER (1935-47)
Side A Flash Gordon/Hop Harrigan
Side B Sky King/Smilin Jack
45-DETECTIVE SAMPLER (1940-44)
Side A Charlie Chan Chick Carter Boy Detective
Side B Don Duren/Dick Tracy
46-MAGIC SAMPLER (1933-41)
Side A Magic Island, Mandrake
Side B Moon over Africa, Omar the Wizard

COMEDY

47-ABBOTT AND COSTELLO (1940)
Side A Who's on First
Side B Into the Future
48-AMOS AND ANDY (1946 & 48)
Side A Andy Buys a Lot
Side B 10,000th Anniversary
49-FRED ALLEN (1948)
Side A Portella and James Mason
Side B Basil Rathbone
50-JACK BENNY (1942 & 47)
Side A Losing at racetrack
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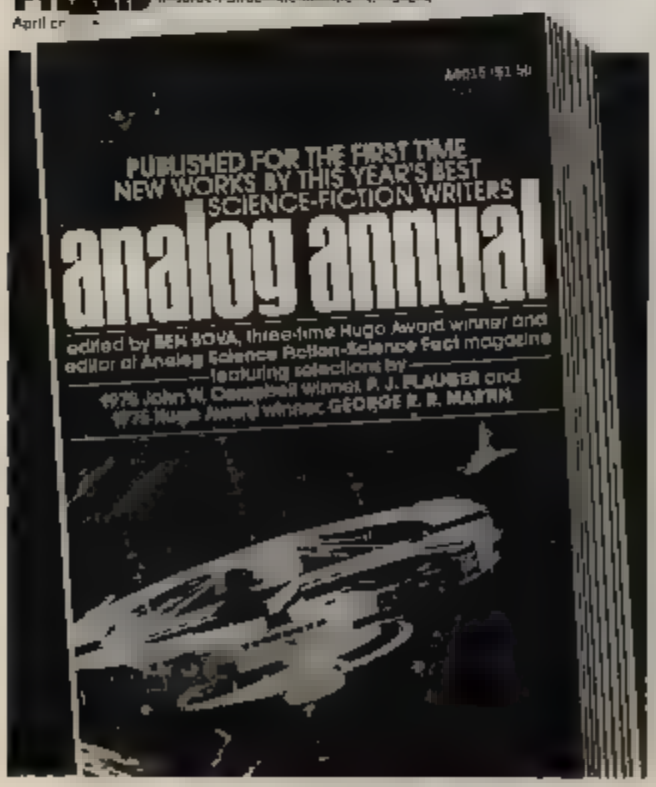
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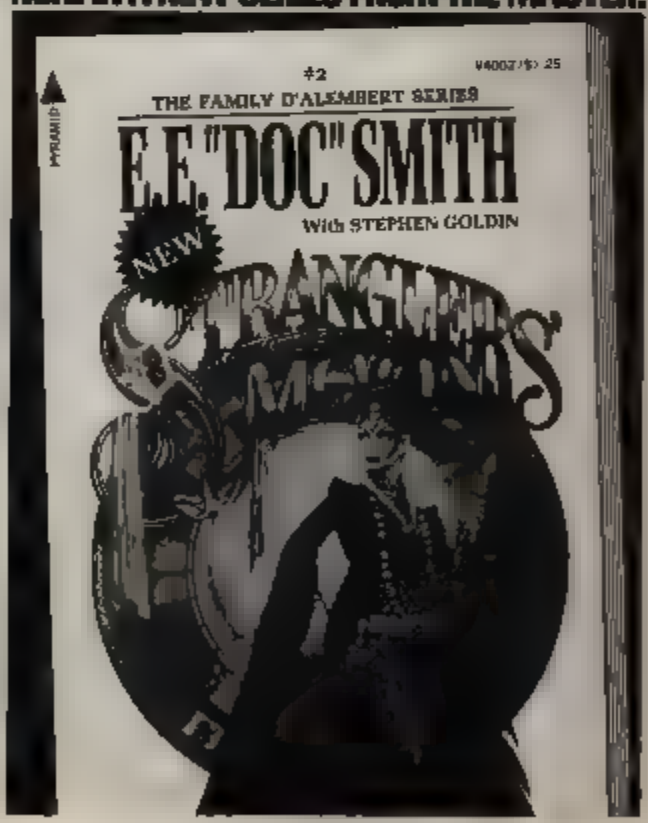


The enemy nation was never specified—our country hadn't entered the war—but enough indications were being given, right down to the straight-arm salute with the "Heil Hitler" aspect replaced by "For the Cause"

his newspaper counterpart yet. when the serial got moving his stature was forgotten. With the help of his youthful sidekick (Jimmy Seaver, Tommy Cook), and the fantastic stuntwork of Dave Sharpe, Barry brought life to the first screen adaptation of the popular comic strip hero an identification that sticks with him to this day, despite the countless number of westerns (including a prolific series for Republic in the early 40's) and dramas he has lent his talents to.

Maude Pierce Adams appeared as Red's aunt the Duchess while film veteran William Farnum appeared in episode one as the hero's father Col. Tom Ryder and was subsequently killed off in the same chapter. Western veteran Hal Taliaferro was guzzled Cherokee Bennett and Vivian Coe was Beth Andrews.

The plot had villains Harry Worth (banker Calvin Drake) and Noah Beery (saloon keeper Ace Hanlon) plotting to drive various ranchers off of their property, via raids from outlaws bossed by Beery, in order to seize said land for an oncoming railroad. Leading Beery's raiders was veteran heavy Robert Kortman (one of the most sinister looking characters to ever tear from a screen in a Saturday matinee audience) as One-Eye Chapin. It should be noted that Beery's appearance has been declared to bear a chillingly accurate living counterpart to the character of Hanlon, a personal newspaper nemesis of Ryder's during that period.

Hot on the heels of Red Ryder, Republic adapted Zane Grey's KING OF THE ROYAL MOUNTED to the screen in a serial that fit into the category of the war-preparedness theme. With Allan Lane cast as Sgt. Dave King of the Royal Canadian Mounties (several years before his more familiar "Rocky" Lane screen identity), the serial told of agents for an unnamed foreign power attempting to steal as much of Compound X (a pitchblend derivative capable of curing infantile paralysis) as possible. It seems that Compound X (explains its curative properties is also capable of magnetizing deadly sea mines, and as such is considered a priority acquisition by the enemy. Naturally our heroes are unaware of this characteristic but they soon find out.

As stated before, the enemy nation was never specified—our country hadn't entered the war but enough indications were being given, right down to the straight-arm salute with the "Heil Hitler" aspect replaced by "For The Cause" (a trick used one year later in KING OF THE TEXAS RANGERS just before we got into the thick of things).

The year '41 saw the Republic entry in the Dick Tracy sweepstakes, one particular comic strip serial which will be examined later.

In 1942 Republic decided to turn its entire serial output that year into a veritable comic-strip bombardment. All three of its chapter plays were directly adapted from comic books or newspaper strips or in one case, came out simultaneously with a special publication and served as the inspiration for a new character.

With the war fully upon us in full force, SPY SMASHER turned out to be a more than appropriate opener. The Fawcett character was a definite product of the war oriented toward reflecting the country's attitude towards the Axis aggressors. During his existence in Whiz Comics and in his own magazine, Spy Smasher achieved his greatest success as a hard-core warrior against enemy forces, sometimes teaming up with Fawcett's main power-house Captain Marvel (the most episode story of Marvel doing battle with a brain-washed Spy Smasher is considered to be one of the classics of the "Golden Age"), and, in one case, Captain Midnight. When the war ended, and an attempt to keep the character going under a new occupation (CRIME-SMASHER) his identification and "ties" with the war years was more than apparent. He was a being out of his time, and disappeared into the limbo of memories.

When Republic adapted SPY SMASHER to film they made a perfect choice in casting Kane Richmond in the title role. Many serial fans consider the actor's appearance in this serial to be at best. But audiences got more than they expected; thanks to Republic's writers Spy Smasher was given a lush brother (Jack (no doubt inspiring enough All-American Boy jokes due the brothers last name of Armstrong). Richmond managed to make the two individuals separate entities, each with his own personality. His capable acting and the magnificent split-screen work and doubling by stand-ins and the studio's stunt-men with special tribute to Dave Sharpe's daredevil work for either brother) managed to pull off one of the most unusual, and difficult, serial capers of the year.

Marguerite Chapman was Eve Corby, changed from Spy Smasher's girlfriend to Jack's fiance while veteran actor Sam Flint was her father, Admiral Corby.

The enemy forces were led by Spy Smasher's perennial comic-strip foe, the Mask, played with teutonic relish by Hans Schumann while Tristram Coffin, Tom London, Paul Bryar and John James were the main quisling henchmen.

But it was the action and chilling-paced plot that kept audiences on the edge of their seats. Chases, perils and room-wrecking fights were the order of the day with buildings, planes and boats blown up at the drop of a hat, thanks to the magnificent special effects work of Howard and Theodore Lydecker whose hard-work remains unsurpassed.

PERILS OF NYOKA does not exhibit quality as a comic-strip serial even though some young-sters are familiar with the character of Nyoka the Jungle Girl from reprints of the Fawcett strip. The serial is actually making its first appearance on screen in a tie-in magazine released in conjunction with the serial. The magazine presented the story of the film and then left things open for more adventures of the heroine and her friends. A short-lived later Nyoka and her friend Dr. Larry Gordon (played by Clayton Moore in the serial) became members of the Fawcett shop group.

Republic's final release for '42 was a sequel to the successful KING OF THE ROYAL MOUNTED. With Allan Lane repeating his characterization of Sgt. Dave King, KING OF THE MOUNTIES was an all-out World War II epic that made sure that the audience damn well knew who the enemy was: the whole Axis. As Republic's writers wove a plot of sabotage within the Canadian territory by the three Axis partners, various effectives were employed on screen. Japan was embodied in Abner Biberman's Arkana, Yamara. Germany by Wallace Ford and Italy in the form of Duncan Renaldo's Count Baroni.

They were the villains, who plotted their acts of sabotage and terrorism from a stronghold deep within the crater of a semi-dormant volcano. The heavy work was carried out by a gang of saddle-tramps led by Bradley Page and Anthony Warde who in turn received orders from that old smoothie, Douglass Dumbrille, as a gunning trading post operator.

The espionage plot and the resulting action was enough to keep the chapter-play moving on its own. But the writers threw in that special little tid-bit that seemed to characterize Republic's serials: a touch of the fantastic manifested itself in the form of a bizarre plane known as The Falcon, an airship capable of the traditional aerial maneuvers plus the added ability of being able to rise and land vertically as well as hover in mid-air.

So effective were the sequences of the Falcon plane in flight or rising and landing within the volcanic crater that they were used wholesale as stock footage in the studio's 1951 serial FLYING DISC MAN FROM MARS. It is interesting to note that since so much stock footage was used the ship itself had to be remade, parts of the original prop dug out of mothballs, right down to the airship's tail with the emblem of the Rising Sun of Japan (even though it was supposed to be Martian 'semi-disc ship: could the Martians have been investing in war surplus?)

Republic started clear of comic-strip heroes for 1943. Any war-time action was being handled by Rod Cameron as Rex Bennet of the Secret Service in G-MEN VS. THE BLACK DRAGON and SECRET SERVICE IN DARKEST AFRICA. THE MASKED MARVEL. In the person of ace-stunt man Tom Steele, executed a spy ring seeking to soften up the country for Japan.

Then at the end of 1943, another character inspired by the war came to the screen: CAPTAIN AMERICA.

This was not the Captain America familiar to fans of the Simon and Kirby strip. There was no war theme in this 15 episode adventure (except for a nation escape on the respective car windows) and any similarity between the popular star-spangled hero and the cinematic incarnation was almost purely accidental.

Stories have cropped up that the screenplay of CAPTAIN AMERICA was originally intended for a more "normal" crime-fighter to be developed by Republic's writers. The resulting film seems to bear this out. The Captain America who battered the agents of the mad Dr. Maldor was almost in no way related to the popular wartime hero. It was almost as if the audience had been ushered into a parallel world where Cap had gone into the entertainment instead of Uncle Sam's ranks.

His secret identity was changed, instead of Steve Rogers, ex-wrestling turned super-hero, Captain America was now Grant

TOP: King of the Royal Mounted Allan Lane struggles with enemy agents. CENTER: Spy Smasher with Kane Richmond and Marguerite Chapman. BOTTOM: Nyoka (Kay Aldridge) lets it all hang out.

Since Republic hadn't been able to carry out their intentions toward Siegel and Shuster's brainchild, the executives decided to take a chance on the Man of Steel's greatest rival, the Big Red Cheese, CAPTAIN MARVEL!

Gardner, fighting District Attorney of a large city. Captain America is considered a mystery man who pops up when things get too tough for the regular law enforcement agencies.

His uniform was altered. This must have caused a stir in the ranks of his fans. He was de-winged apparently it was felt that the familiar adornments would prove hampering for the many fights that marked the film. His shield was removed (even the Lydeckers must have been stumped as to how to work Cap's trademark into the above-mentioned action). He did ride a motorcycle (one he purloined from the heavies) for an episode or two, but he generally stuck to automobiles.

Last, but not least, Cap's sidekick Bucky was eliminated and the D.A. clan costumed hero wound up with a secretary/assistant. Gail Richards played by Lorna Gray! Easier on the eyes than Bucky. Gail Richards wasn't that much of a replacement in a fight, even though she always carried a gun in her purse, but she could think fast, when she wasn't knocked out (a recurring situation during the serial's 15 episodes).

The villain of the piece, however, was the thing. In the hands of veteran menace Lionel Atwill Dr. Maldor (a.k.a. The Scarab) was one of those special heavies who took a definite delight in his work. Atwill made Maldor a picture of unflagging arrogance and even getting into a bit of the kinky as he flogged a stubborn captive with a cat-o-nine-tails.

Dick Purcell threw himself into the role of Captain America. A bit on the spooky side. Purcell lacked a mite too heavy in his Captain America suit. Stuntman Dale Van Sickel doubled Purcell for the numerous fisticuffs.

As the Scarab's chief henchmen, George Lewis (Watson, the action hero) and John Davidson (Maldor's fanatic aide, Gruber) added to the fun.

What helped keep interest going in the serial was its rapid pace, with the fights and action literally hurled at the audience. While not a classic, CAPTAIN AMERICA boils down to basic serial fun, despite the tampering with a character who has become something of a legend, even if only in pen-and-ink.

With the release of CAPTAIN AMERICA Republic ended its comic-strip adaptations leaving behind a group of chapter-plays that remain as some of the finest of this type of entertainment. Some were amazingly faithful to the strips, while others brought out new often dynamic aspects to the characters.

Republic's specialty was the 'B' picture, be it western drama or serial. They were the studio's staple item and Republic refined its production techniques to a fine art. The special effects work of the Lydecker brothers, stock scores (some of the best original action music) by such composers as William Lava, Cy Feuer, Mort Glickman and the like, and the rapid pace directing by men such as William Witney, John English and Spencer G. Bennett gave zest to the proceedings, proving that for a company that some disparagingly referred to as Republic Pictures, Republic knew how to get as much as possible out of a comparatively modest budget and give audiences some never-to-be-equalled thrills.

PART THREE: TWO SUPER GUYS

In 1940, Republic Pictures announced, in one of its future production brochures, its intention of producing a serial adapted from the Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster character the mighty SUPERMAN. With the studio's ardent quality in the action field, plus the possibility of what they could do with the character that literally helped build the National Periodicals empire, it was more than evident that fans of both the comic strip and the serial genre had something to look forward to with great anticipation.

But those expectations were doomed when the impending production failed to materialize. At the same time Republic announced its intention and was in negotiations with Superman's publishers, Paramount Pictures was making an offer to use the celebrated super-hero as the basis for a series of animated cartoon adventures. It was decided, after a check with writer Siegel, that the super-hero from Krypton would appear to better advantage in the form of a cartoon.

The result was that Superman and Republic Pictures came to a parting of the ways. The Man of Steel's serial incarnation lay in the future.

Since Republic hadn't been able to carry out their intentions toward Siegel and Shuster's brainchild, the executives in charge decided to take a chance on the Man of Steel's greatest rival in the comics field, the Big Red Cheese himself, Captain Marvel.

And so it was that 1941 saw

Captain America. Dick Purcell in the familiar red, white and blue outfit.

OPPOSITE **Captain Marvel** (Tom Tyler) in the lair of the Scorpion.

that has become a classic fantasy-adventure serial yet to be equalled: THE ADVENTURES OF CAPTAIN MARVEL.

For 2 weeks, spell-bound audiences watched Billy Batson shout the magic word that would transform him into the world's mightiest mortal. But the Marvel that appeared on the screen was not the good-natured rambling hero audiences knew from Wilk Comics and Captain Marvel Magazine. On the motion picture screen in the person of muscular Tom Tyler, Captain Marvel became a stern, dedicated avenger battling to protect mankind from the plotting of the sinister Scorpion, who intended to bring the world under his domination through the use of five ancient magic crystals capable of changing rock to gold or unleashing a terrible, unstoppable power against which there would be no defense.

Casting for the serial was perfect. Tom Tyler's Rock-like profile and powerful physique made him a Captain Marvel you didn't mess around with. Modelled visibly after the first initial appearance of the super-hero created by white magic, this Marvel thought nothing of disclosing his anger by machine-gunning hill-workers in the back, hurling a heavy to his death from atop a 2-story multi-level garage.

The edge of a dark or even a triple seizing a quaking gunman and snarling, "Talk or I'll ..." leaving the feeling that the penalty for non-cooperation was not left to the imagination. Perhaps it is merciful that we never saw Marvel get that angry! His brand of stern justice was a little unsettling.

While Tom Tyler was the perfect cinematic choice for Marvel, Frank Coghlan, Jr. was an excellent Billy Batson, contrasting sharply with the powerful super-hero. Today Coghlan is still identified strongly by serial fans with the classic chapter-play having emerged from the film with a pair of scorched eyebrows and a characterization young viewers could identify with. How many young-sters back in '41 wished they could say that magic word and become the World's Mightiest Mortal?

William Benedict was Batson's sidekick Whitey Murphy and wound up with the unique distinction of creating a character who was transferred intact to the Marvel strip itself. The comic's plot had Whitey visiting Billy at the young newscaster's office at station W.H.I.Z., reminding Batson of the Marvel serial and telling the youngster that Dr. Malcolm (leader of the serial expedition) had vanished on a trip into the South American jungles. Of course Malcolm was rescued and the mystery of an apparently very real native god was solved.

The drawings of Whitey and Dr. Malcolm were based very closely upon the actual appearance of Benedict and actor Robert Strange who had portrayed Malcolm in the serial, with one beautiful gag having Whitey coming face to face with a native totem that looked disturbingly like him, right down to the shaggy thatch atop his forehead.

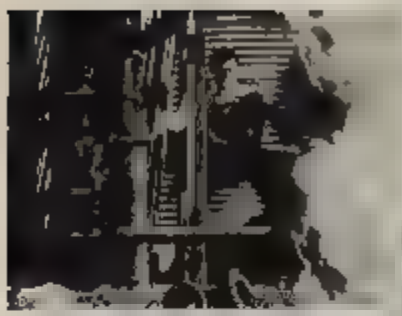
With this appearance the character of Whitey would become a regular in the Marvel strip, gradually acquiring a position as a radio technician for station WHIZ before apparently being phased out when the villainous Captain Nazi made his first appearance on the World War II scene.

As Betty Wallace, Louise Currie received her share of serial punishment as the expedition's secretary. Everything happened to her. She was gassed in the back of a moving truck, nearly hit by a plaster dropped from a window trapped inside a sinking ship, almost blown up in a shack on an old bombing range and in episode 12 destined to be used as a demonstration target by the Scorpion for his disintegrating ray.

Besides the strong plot-line and excellent performances by the serial's cast, was Republic's technical excellence, particularly in the realm of special effects. The visual wizardry of Howard and Theodora Lydecker gave audiences breath-taking sequences of Marvel flying (thanks to their amazing use of a specially constructed larger-than-life dummy and a smaller version for perspective work) that have yet to be equalled. The already impressive visual impact was heightened by Dave Sharpe's amazing doubling for Marvel in take-offs from rocks, buildings, boulders, ledges etc. that made one gasp in amazement (and wonder how the hell he didn't break his neck!)

While the mighty Marvel was making his mark in the serial ranks, however, the Man of Steel wasn't idle.

When Paramount Pictures acquired the rights for cartoons featuring Superman, the result was a series of 17 color animated adventures from the studio of Max Fleischer. Filled with action, capturing on film the excitement, fantasy and visual imagery of the Siegel and Shuster super-hero as it was



TOP Superman (Kirk Alyn) puts his super-powers against the oppressors of justice and freedom

BOTTOM Gotham's Dynamic Duo: Batman (Lewis Wilson) and Robin (Douglas Croft) foil the plans of the evil Dr Daka (J. Carrol Naish).

The BATMAN of 1943 looked like an individual wearing a baggy devil suit and a cowl which displayed an irritating tendency to slide upwards during action scenes and reveal the face beneath the mask.

being written and drawn in the early 40s, the cartoons were a definite hit! Many have commented as to how closely the drawings of the Superman characters stuck to the style of the printed strip. Jerry Siegel reported that Joe Shuster was flown to the Fleischer animation set-up, which was based in Miami, and designed a series of 'model sheets' showing the way the strip's characters appeared. Judging from the reactions of comic scholars today the Fleischer artists must have followed Shuster's concepts faithfully.

That the cartoons came out as well as they did is a tribute to the Fleischer organization, since the films were something of a radical departure for the group. In the past they had specialized in such unreal characters as Popeye the Sailor, Betty Boop, Koko the Clown and the other denizens of the Max Fleischer world. The closest they had come to drawing a character who looked like an actual human being was in the feature GULLIVER'S TRAVELS with the traveler Gulliver and the tiny prince and princess of Lilliput and Blefuscu.

Today the series is enjoying an incredible revival of popularity as fans flock to view the vintage productions at various science-fiction and comic conventions, often viewing a single cartoon as often as three or four times!

Nothing was heard of Superman on the screen until 1948 and the release of a 15 chapter serial by Columbia, entitled, simply SUPERMAN. Directed by Spencer G. Bennett (a veteran action director who began his career in the days of the silents) and Thomas Carr, the film featured Kirk Alyn as the Man of Steel. As Buster Crabbe became identified with Flash Gordon, Ralph Byrd with Dick Tracy and Tom Tyler with Captain Marvel, so did Kirk Alyn [redacted] the hero from Krypton.

Beginning in its first few episodes with Superman's origin, his discovery of his super-powers, journey to Metropolis and employment as a reporter for THE DAILY PLANET, SUPERMAN gave the Man of Steel the only villain he couldn't strike - a woman! Known as the Spider Lady (played with evil zest by Carol Forman), this self-styled 'Queen of the Underworld' kept the man of steel hopping as she attempted to secure the Relativity Reducer Ray (a device capable of harnessing reducer rays (a.k.a. cosmic rays) and converting them into a weapon against which there was no defense, except you-know-who). Seeking to prove that the female of the species was definitely deadlier than the male, the Spider Lady intended to literally rule the world.

The serial proved to be more of a success than anticipated, despite one point that some purists harp upon. Whenever Superman took to the air animation blended in with the live figure (quite admirably as a matter of fact). True, it was not the same quality of work as the Lydecker's of Republic, but somehow after a while viewers got used to it, going along with the fun. How else can you explain the success of the film.

It was booked into the RKO Theater chain in New York playing all of the circuit's first-run houses (wonder if it ever played the Palace?). Exhibitors booked it like mad for their theaters and it became one of Columbia's biggest money makers.

As an indication of the film's impact, it should be noted that whenever Columbia released a new serial for the next two years its press-book or advertising always stressed that this was the company that gave exhibitors SUPERMAN. Her sole serial. CONGO BILL. Columbia's press-book stressed to exhibitors that 'Superman fans are Congo Bill fans, too' - of course that both the Man of Steel and the Jungle explorer appeared in Action Comics might have had a bit to do with it).

SUPERMAN's success prompted Columbia to come up with a sequel in 1950. Entitled ATOM MAN VS. SUPERMAN this 15 chapter epic had the Man of Steel battling his arch-enemy Lex Luthor (played with uneven heat and evil relish by Lyle Talbot), who uses his amazing genius in electronics and television to create a new crime wave while ostensibly going straight as owner of a television station. With kryptonite already a familiar feature of the strip (and used quite extensively in the first serial), a new slant was given to the plot when Luthor managed to actually do the impossible: he apparently got rid of Superman by projecting him into the Empty Doom, another dimension where the ghost-like figure of Superman could only watch helplessly as crime went wild and he could do nothing to stop it.

For the four main characters, Columbia's serial division, headed by Sam Katzman, did an excellent job of casting.

Of course, Kirk Alyn is still identified strongly with the character, a phenomenon that exists today (amazingly enough youngsters are really into this, considering that they have been exposed to the George Reeves television version and the made-for-tv cartoons). Donning the red 'S' of Superman became more of a thing than even Kirk Alyn or Columbia imagined.

Noel Neill became the Lois Lane for those with saw and serial and for fans of the television series. Only one other actress portrayed Lois on film: Phyllis Coates, appearing as the plucky girl reporter in a 1951 feature SUPERMAN AND THE MOLE MEN and for the first year or so of the television series. But Noel Neill still remains as the personification of Clark Kent's friendly rival on the staff of the Planet.

As Perry White, veteran character actor Pierre Watkin was a crusty hard-driving newspaper editor with a slight soft spot and no lack of courage, while Tommy Bond (best recalled as the bully of the Little Rascals short subjects) got in enough scrapes as Jimmy Olsen.

TOP: Nita Van Sloan (Iris Meredith) seeks the aid of The Spider (Warren Hull). CENTER: The Spider Strikes! BOTTOM: The Shadow (Victor Jory) slugs it out with a gang of foemen.

PART FOUR: THE FINAL CHAPTER

Not the release of TERRY AND THE PIRATES, Columbia shied away from comic strip heroes. The closest the studio came to the pen-and-ink good guys from 1938 to 43 was the appearance of two popular crime fighters from the 'pulp' magazines, Richard Wentworth and his alter-ego, the Spider, smashed their way onto the screen in two adventures, THE SPIDER'S WEB (1938) and THE SPIDER RETURNS (1941). With Warren Hull as the 'Master of Men' and Kenneth Duncan (abandoning his filmic evil ways for the nonce) as Wentworth's Hindu servant Ram Singh, the first of the two adventures proved to be the strongest one with the Spider battling a wave of terror created by the mysterious (and multi-armed) Octopus, who intended to seize control of the nation's transportation industries. Iris Meredith was Wentworth's fiance. Nita Van Sloan and Richard Fiske portrayed Wentworth's aide from World War I days, Jackson. The second Spider adventure had the masked crusader battling the espionage forces of the Gargoyle. Hull and Duncan repeated their original roles while blonde Mary Ainslee and Dave O'Brien took over as Nita and Jackson.

THE SHADOW (1940) featured Victor Jory as Lamont Cranston. The Shadow and B-pictures favorite Veda Ann Borg as Margo Lane. The mystery menace was an individual known as the Black Tiger who was after a new super-explosive force. Jory was one of the serial's strongest points as the Shadow but this adventure and THE SPIDER RETURNS suffered the same problem that had plagued TERRY AND THE PIRATES' director James W. Horne.

In 943, Columbia released two serials, both adapted from popular comic heroes.

First to romp across the screen was the Batman. Combining the familiar elements of the DC character with World War II patriotic fervor the Columbia serial had the 'caped crusader' taking on a gang of fifth columnists working for Japan (led by the diabolical Dr. Daka (played to the hilt by J. Carrol Naish as one of the many examples of the 'yellow peril' so rife in films of this period), the fifth columnists managed to keep Batman and Robin on the move through 15 episodes before being brought to book.

Lewis Wilson did a fairly good job as Bruce Wayne/Batman, managing to keep a fine line between the supposedly indolent millionaire and the alert Batman. Unfortunately the serial turned out to be Wilson's first and only screen appearance. Perhaps identification with the Gotham City crime-fighter had something to do with it; or somebody high up didn't feel Wilson had much of a cinematic future. Whatever the cause, Wilson never appeared in films again.

Douglas Croft was a little too much to take as Robin/Dick Grayson. Looking a bit too young to be battling assorted heavies (usually bigger than he was), Croft seemed too slender for his appearances as Robin to fit the pen-and-ink image. When a stunt-man took over for him, the difference in builds was more than evident.

One sometimes has the feeling that the first glimpse of Batman and Robin on the screen must have been a bit disappointing to fans of the strip. The Batman of 1943 looked like an individual wearing a slightly baggy devil's suit that had been altered for the occasion. Added to this was the factor that in some of the fight sequences the cowl and mask of the costume would display an irritating tendency to slide upwards on the face whenever it was worn by the stunt-man, thereby revealing the face beneath the mask while the

CAPTAIN VIDEO might be considered a comic strip adventure since Fawcett was publishing a comic magazine based on his adventures, but in reality had his roots in the film medium's deadliest rival, television.

sound-stage orchestra belted out action music that in some moments seemed to be derived from portions of Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*.

As Dr Duke J Carrol Naish glimpse classic the film in every scene he appears buried in Oriental makeup sometimes underplaying his part totally (and per other times pulling out the stops. Naish is the center of attention whether he is issuing orders to his underlings demonstrating his atom smasher ray gun espousing the doctrine of the New Order or leering deftly as he leads a rebellious henchmen to the crocodiles.

By today's standards it is almost bizarre that this film caused such a wave of what has been called Bat mania through out the country. And with its release in one solid 4-hour installment (not mail giving rise to the television series) that deliberately played its shows for camp in contrast to the very serious attitude of the original production.

Lee Falk and Ray Moore's "Ghost-Who-Walks" appeared hot on the heels of Batman with Tom Tyler donning the costume and mask of the jungle avenger.

Directed by B. Reeves Eason, THE PHANTOM pitted the mystery man of the jungle against the machinations of one Dr Brewster a supposedly respectable individual who was searching for the lost city of Zanzi. His intention was to build a hidden airfield from which he could control the jungle supposedly for the Axis). His plans are hampered by the appearance of the Davidson expedition, led by Professor Davidson (Frank Shannon Dr. Zarkov himself) the scientist's niece Diana Palmer (Jeanne Bates) upper strait type Byron Andrews (Guy Kingsford) who looks on Diana as his, and a young chap named Godfrey Prescott (Tyler), who has come to this particular region of the jungle for reasons other than the expedition.

Seems he is the son of the present Phantom who has been mortally wounded by a poison dart fired by an ape which doctor in league with Brewster's henchman, during of his father's condition, Godfrey joins his parent during his last moments and taking the sacred oath of the Skull, immerses his identity forever in the guise of the Phantom, perpetuating the legend of the Man Who Never Died.

From time to time the Phantom would assume his super-secret identity of Mr Walker, right down to the evening and dark glasses he would be aided sometimes by Inuba Rusty Fenton (Ernie Adams), or a faithful native follower (John Bagni).

The serial has not been seen for many years due to a contract between Columbia Pictures and King Features Syndicate which kept the screen rights to the character to revert back to King Features after a certain period time. This type of contract caused a headache for the studio and producer Sam Katzman.

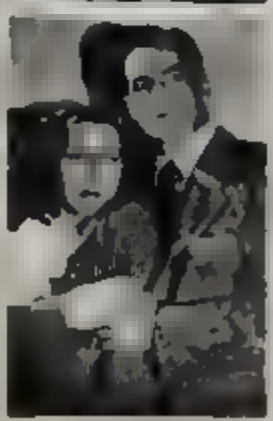
1966. At the time Katzman was making a serial intended as a sequel to the original Phantom epic. The lead John Hart was with a duplicate of the Phantom costume in order to match stock footage. But after most of Hart's sequences were shot word came down Columbia's agreement with King Features had expired: they couldn't use the costume or the footage.

For a producer with a low-budget for such a production such as Batman this was cause enough for a long sized headache. All of Hart's scenes had to be re-shot with a new outfit devised that would approximate the original costume. And so in another's helmet mask sweat shirt Hart's breeches and boots the Phantom character was rebuilded Captain Africa and the serial's title emerged as ADVENTURES OF CAPTAIN AFRICA. The serial itself was a chaotic composite of new footage and stock sequences from such past Columbia adventures as THE DESERT HAWK, JUNGLE MENACE and of course THE PHANTOM.

Up to 1944, Columbia's serials had been produced by such individuals as Louis and Adrian Weiss Jack Fier Larry Darmour and Rudolph Flothow. But in 1945 Sam Katzman stepped into Columbia's B picture division and literally took over the division responsible for serials.

His first Columbia chapter-play was BRENDA STARR, REPORTER with Joan Woodbury as the dauntless lady newshound for the Daily Flash. She was generally rescued from assorted perils by Spy Smasher himself, Kane Richmond, in the guise of police Lt. Larry Farrell.

In 1946 HOP HARRIGAN in the person of William Bakewell battled agents of the unknown Chief Pilot. The object of all this fighting a new source of limitless power discovered by pilot/inventor Dr Tobor (John Merton). CHICK CARTER DETECTIVE changed from the young son of the famed kids Carter to the more mature Lyle Talbot. A police detective, Carter worked with reporters Douglas



TOP: Durand (Frank Corsaro) saves Spy Smasher (Kane Richmond) from a Nazi Firing Squad. CENTER: The Phantom (Tom Tyler) looks heroically on while Devil (Ace the Wonder Dog) looks off-stage. BOTTOM: Belinda Blair (Joan Woodbury) convinces police Lt. Larry Farrell (Kane Richmond)

Fawley and Eddie Acuff.

The following year things got more serious although as comic strip adaptations. Ralph Byrd starred the snap brim and trench-coat of Dick Tracy in the Gang Busters the Iron Trousered A.K.A. The Vigilante" Buster Crabbe took to the high seas as the skipper of a comic strip and radio vessel F SEA HOUND with James Ralph Hodges and Spanky McFarlan as his aides in attempt to capture a ring of high Gordon-ish pretenders was made in BRICK BRADFORD starred Kane Richmond's last serial appearance. As Richmond battled a gang of foreign power on Earth and hostile aliens on the moon. At times the serial had an interesting element of two and even utilized one of serial's most famous devices the Time Top but except for its science-fiction-style moments, it was a sometimes better than average adventure (with the alien soldiers a little hard to accept with their uniforms of the day consisting of T-shirts, Bermuda shorts, gym socks and moccasins).

Superman proved to be the biggest hit of the chapter-play race for 1948.

"FLYING G-MAN" rode the greats the person of Robert Kellard with attempted between his normal identity and the guise of a mysterious masked rider. Peggy Stewart, the attractive heroine of many westerns and several serials co-starred.

CONGO BILL was portrayed by Don McGuire an actor better known for his portrayals of con men scheming opportunists and shifty operators. For these who wonder that kind about hotties with (spectrous) white men and savage beasts of the jungle there was Carry Blondell as Vicomte to attract their guess her appearance as the queen a hostile tribe.

BRUCE GENTRY (1949) flew through the skies trying to learn the secret of some incredibly fast armored Flying Discs. Tom Neal sported a mustache as the serious Flyer in a serial that was a bit better than usual thanks to the stunt work by some of the comedy usually based at Republic (Tom Steele, Dale Van Sickel, Fred Graham).

Batman and Robin returned in a new adventure with Robert Lowery and Johnny Duncan donning the mask and cape of the caped heroes. As they coped with the minions of the new-you-see-them now-you-don't villain known as the Wizard the new heroes did their best, with Lowery hampered by a cowl whose elongated nose-piece made one think more of a bird of prey than a crime-fighter.

In 1950, the Man of Steel flew again in ATOM MAN VS. SUPERMAN the only official comic entry for that year. CAPTAIN VIDEO (1951) might be considered a comic-strip adventure, since Fawcett Publications was publishing a comic magazine based on the adventures of the Master of Time and Space. But in reality Video had his roots in the film medium's deadliest rival television. The serial itself was a campy disappointment despite its planet-hopping at the drop of a Thermograph and a plethora of at least 30 super-science gadgets from the Opticon Bellometer to the Psychosonic Plunger (!).

The last film of comic cinema from Columbia and any studio for that matter made in 1952's only serial release.

Buster Crabbe battled commie agents in the jungles as the KING OF THE CONGO. Based on the Magazine Enterprises hero. The Mighty Thor, the serial was not exactly a faithful adaptation of the strip. Instead of the jungle-born hero (complete with a cape hooded sidekick Buster Crabbe portraying Capt. Roger Dunn of the Air Force. Dunn's plane is struck by lightning and he crashes in the jungle. Aided by the friendly Rock People who look on him as Yunda King of the Congo, after he has rung an enormous gong to warn them of an attack by an unfriendly tribe. Dunn alternates between Cyrano and a Tarzan style wardrobe as he copes with both phony agents and the hostile Cave Men.

But while Thunda took extreme violence with the character BLACKHAWK stuck as close as possible to the strip. Starring Kirk Alyn as the leader of the multi nation group of heroes, BLACKHAWK press the heroes against those old subversives, leaving the enemy was Alyn's foe from the Superman serial and Federal Agents Vs. Underworld inc. Carol Forman, Leaping, fighting and looking manly in true hero tradition Alyn was backed up by John Crawford (Chuck), Rick Vallin (Stanislaus), Don Harvey (Olaf), Weaver Levy (A Jewish Korean ! as Chop Chop), Larry Stewart (an incredibly un-Gaelic Andre) and Frank Ellis (Hendrickson, who usually seemed to be confined to base servicing the Blackhawk planes).

Cartoy in many respects BLACKHAWK was basically a film piece of film, with the heroes getting heavies at the drop of a hat or clambering after the enemy over the ridges and

pipes of a gas plant.

With the release of BLACKHAWK the comic-based serial made its last appearance on theatre screens.

Four years later the last serial to be made in the United States was released. By the late 40's the production of serials had taken a turn downward. The interest in the chapter-plays was not what it used to be. Revenue brought in by the serials had gone down, while production costs had gone up. Use of stock footage increased as the years went on, in an effort to cope with the mounting rates, shooting schedules were shortened and budgets were decreased. Often, such moves showed. Story lines seemed to lose their special quality. For the most part. Once in a while, something fresh would crop up (such as Republic's flying suit concept which received its baptism in 1949's KING OF THE ROCKET MEN and then appeared in RADAR MEN FROM THE MOON, ZOMBIES OF THE STRATOSPHERE and the COMMANDO CODY series of 1953), but such moments were rare.

In the early 50s many of Universal's old adventures, plus those of Mascot were popping up in the tube. Youngsters only had to turn a dial to watch Flash Gordon battle Ming, Buck Rogers and the Hidden City fight the forces of Killer Kane, or thrill to Red Barry solving the Chinatown murders while the Fighting Marines battled the Tiger Shark.

Personally Republic's adventures took first place in my preferences. Their slick production qualities, imaginative scripts and magnificent special effects and stunt work made the serials of the 40s something special to view and thrill to.

Universal came second. Their plots were often interesting, but sometimes plot interfered with what would have been action and the protagonists literally talked a situation to death.

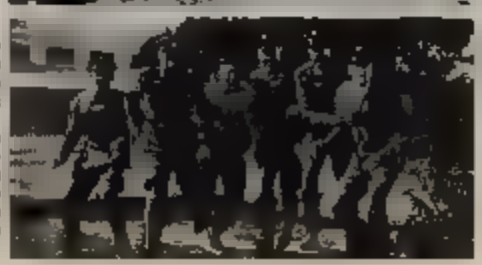
Columbia, for the most part had an erratic track record. Sometimes they came up with a good serial and even tried to come up with different ideas. But more often than not, their adventures were not as good as they could have been (sometimes even the art-work for the posters was better than the serials themselves). Wholesale use of stock footage, decreased budgets and shooting schedules were contributing factors to the quality of much of that studio's serial product. Some episodes might be enjoyable, even good; just as often, or more so, they were ridiculous, even wretched.

Whatever moments of quality and special excitement we enjoyed in serials from any studio, it was often the director who helped pull it off. Men such as William Witney, John English, Spencer Gordon Bennett, Ray Taylor and Ford Beebe gave these cinematic nail-biters special highlights giving us moments to cherish or thrill to when we saw them on the screen or re-run them in our memories.

With the passing of the serials, an era of innocence left us as well. Of course, we have had variations on this concept: some TV series were based on popular comic strip heroes. The James Bond adventures have often been referred to as comic strips for adults.

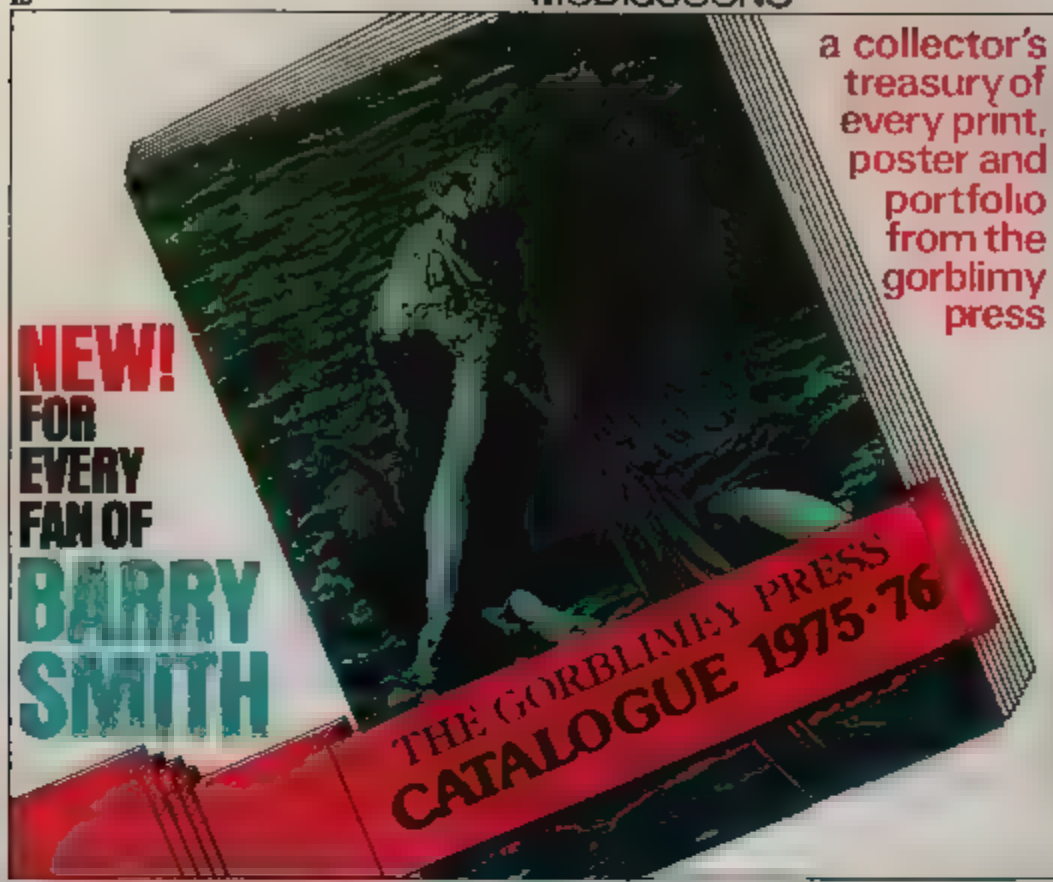
But there is something special about the memory of racing to a Saturday Matinee, week after week, waiting to see how our favorite good guy got out of his apparently inescapable predicament. The thrill has gone for now, and we're a little poorer for it.●

With the passing of the serials, an era of innocence left us as well. The thrill has gone for now, and we're all a little poorer for it.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: **Captain Midnight** (Dave O'Brien) collars one of Ivan Shark's hoods. **Congo Bill** (Don McGuire) whips up a little action. **Brick Bradford** (Kane Richmond again) and June Saunders (Linda Johnson) enjoy the narrow doorway of the Time Top. Judd Holdren flattens the enemy in **Captain Video**. The fearless Blackhawks and Chop Chop with **Blackhawk** (Kirk Alyn).

This issue of **MEDIASCENE** is respectfully dedicated to Kirk Alyn, Siegel and Shuster, Dave Sharpe, Frank Coghlan, Bill Benedict, the late Roy Barcroft and all those who helped make the serial the special entertainment it was.


NEW!
FOR EVERY FAN OF
BARRY SMITH
a collector's treasury of every print, poster and portfolio from the gorblimy press
THE GORBLIMEY PRESS
CATALOGUE 1975-76

As an illustrator of comic books, BARRY SMITH will always be remembered as the four-color Conan artist. When his talent and ambition began to eclipse the limitations of the medium, SMITH established his own publishing company, The Gorblimey Press. His aim was to produce a line of high quality illustrated material available to collectors at reasonable prices. During its existence, The Gorblimey Press has enjoyed immense popularity—and many of its productions have since gone out of print!

Because a number of his finest pieces are no longer available, SMITH has collected them in a single volume which reproduces all the Gorblimey Press material over the past two years. SMITH examines each production (reproduced in full-page size). In addition to eloquently restating the aspirations of The Gorblimey Press, in a penetrating 4500 word critique **The Gorblimey Press Catalog** also features several pieces which have had very limited exposure, and numerous photos of SMITH in his studio.

The Gorblimey Press Catalog is 8½" x 11" in size and printed on quality paper with two-color covers. It is a handsome and important addition to any collection of BARRY SMITH art, and showcases the full range of his talent. If you're marveled at SMITH's barbaric and detailed worlds of swordsmen and sorcerers, don't miss the new **GORBLIMEY PRESS CATALOG**. $3.00 plus .50 postage.

Who is Chandler?

He's six feet of hard boiled private eye, with a talent for trouble, an eye for beauty, a knockout punch in each fist—and a 45 automatic slung in a shoulder holster for when the going gets rough.

He's a hunter, tracking a sadistic killer through the concrete jungle of New York City in the late 30's.

He's a sucker, a suspect, a killer, a lover, a loser, a victim, and a hero with a ticket to hell, all rolled up in a wrinkled trenchcoat with a pocketful of bad luck.

He's a tough new detective hero, created by Steranko in the tradition of Philip Marlowe and Sam Spade, who finds himself involved in an almost impossible case, working for a man doomed to die and hungry for revenge.

Follow Chandler down the twisted corridors of the human soul as he plays a deadly game of murder with a hired killer whose only rule is that there are NO rules.

RED TIDE is the first adventure of an exciting, realistic new concept by Steranko and the third offering from Pyramid's graphic novel series, **FICTION ILLUSTRATED**.

Written and illustrated by Steranko (his first story in five years), **Chandler** is the graphic story's answer to the great private eye films of the 40's, **The Maltese Falcon, Murder My Sweet** and **The Big Sleep**. It combines a new experimental form of storytelling with a powerful, highly dramatic art style, in a suspense-packed story where nothing is ever what it seems to be.

Chandler will be available in two sizes for the collector.

The **DIGEST EDITION** of Chandler is printed on newsprint in full-color for only $1.00 plus .25 postage and handling.

The **DELUXE LIMITED EDITION** is published in an oversized volume in full-color on heavy vellum stock, wrapped in stiff board covers. This edition is priced at $4.95 plus .50 postage and handling.

And available exclusively from Supergraphics is the special **BOOKPLATE EDITION**, limited to 750 copies. This edition is distinguished by a unique illustrated bookplate, which will be *personally numbered* and *autographed by Steranko*. Chandler's award-winning artist and writer. Lowest numbers will be given to the earliest orders. $7.50 plus .50 postage and handling.

Whichever edition you choose, you'll get a brand new high-tension detective thriller with over 100 pages of full-color. An atmospheric wraparound painting by Steranko covers every book and makes the entire edition a valuable addition to your collection.

If you're a Steranko fan—and if you like trigger-quick Bogart, Cagney and Robinson films of the 40's, you'll want to meet Chandler face to face in his first explosive adventure—and have the crime of your life!

AMERICA'S NEW MAGAZINE OF POPULAR ENTERTAINMENT

MEDIASCENE

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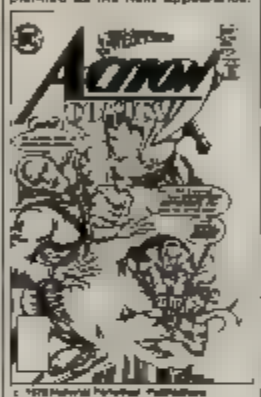
COMIXSCENE

It's literally the "Fight of the Century" as the Man of Steel meets the World's Greatest in the Limited Edition-sized comic **Superman Meets Muhammad Ali**. Joe Kubert will illustrate, and Denny O'Neil will script this monumental masterpiece, with Jenette Kahn, Julie Schwartz, Sol Harrison, Joe Orlando and Kubert overseeing the production.

The deal started when Jenette, Sol and Julie were discussing the fact that, since Ali was merchandising an action-doll for Mego Toys, perhaps they could promote a 30-cent comic about him. Bob Kane had the same idea, but couldn't close the deal. After kicking the idea around, Julie humorously noted that Ali should fight Superman.

The seed was planted. Then Joe Kubert got into the act. Since he is DC's top artist and was at the right place at the right time, Joe was assigned to draw a presentation piece (our cover for Section Two) which was blown up to large size, colored, and shown to Ali's promoter Don King by Harrison and Kahn. The idea, with its youth-market appeal, intrigued the Ali people, and within a short time the contracts were signed, with Ali reserving final script approval.



kubert weighs in for superman slugfest

Kubert will pencil and ink the entire job, taking particular pains to capture the current physical characteristics of Superman. A definite price has not been established for the project yet. A special feature is planned to make the book more than just a comic. At first a 3-D insert was discussed, but a four-color pull-out poster is probably more likely.

The storyline for **Superman Meets Muhammad Ali** currently revolves around a warrior race of aliens who plan to conquer the Earth, but don't particularly want to destroy it. They ask Earth to pick a champion to represent their side. The Man of Steel is chosen. Unfortunately, he must fight on an alien planet where his powers are nullified. At gets into the act by giving the Kryptonian boxing lessons in the Fortress of Solitude, and naturally finds a way to continue appearing throughout the story. Cameos by boxing greats Joe Louis and Jack Dempsey may sprout from the Kubert pencil along with the expected dynamics and excitement.

Kubert estimates that the entire project will take three months to create. Christmas release is the date National is shooting for. Hopefully this will be the beginning of a fresh outburst of Kubert artwork with the promised **Bible** project planned as his next appearance.

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and a more regular output of stories.

As a final note on the book, the artwork appearing on our second cover may be an original which will not be featured elsewhere. It will probably be used as the cover for the plan production, but the background characters will be redrawn to include flashy ladies, million-aires and the more contemporary crowd that makes up the Ali entourage.

Preproduction work continues on the Warner Bros. **Superman** film, with casting, unit and special effects background filming getting underway in Europe. We were in Sol Harrison's office when he received a call from producer Alexander Salkind in Italy with the news that Marlon Brando had just been signed for the major role of Jor-El in the film. Sol told us he would like to see either Telly Savalas or Gene Hackman appear as Lex Luthor. A great deal of the film will be occupied with flashbacks to Krypton and its destruction. Burt Reynolds is still not signed for the Ilia role, and as more time passes, his possible involvement in the film diminishes.

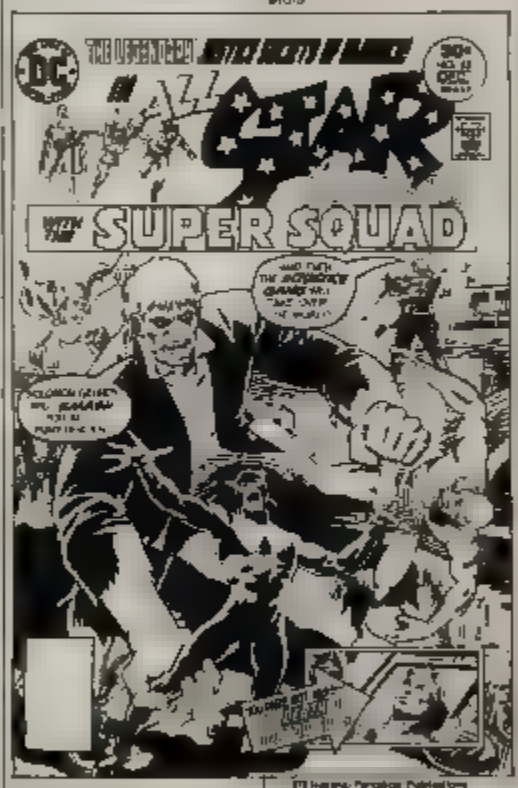
Changes are overtaking National at a furious pace, and a complete shake-up of the established order is resulting in a general improvement of working conditions for all DC personnel.

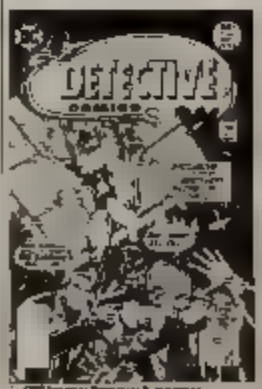
Joe Orlando is now the overall editor of the National line, with each of the other editors specializing in different aspects of DC's output. Murray Boltinoff has relinquished his superhero titles so that he can concentrate on National's war books and mystery titles. Julie Schwartz continues to remain the caretaker of DC's superstars, providing structural continuity for **Batman, Superman, Green Lantern, JLA, The Flash** and **Wonder Woman**.

Joe Kubert's responsibilities will remain essentially the same, with more emphasis on his artistic talents in the future. Joe is, in many ways, National's resident super-star artist/writer, and the company as well as thousands of fans would like to see these talents exhibited more prominently.

Orlando himself will retain direct editorial control over most of National's off-beat and experimental projects, which make up nearly sixty per-cent of the company's total output. Denny O'Neil will be helping Orlando to shoulder the load by becoming a Story Editor and generally supervising the production of a dozen or more titles.

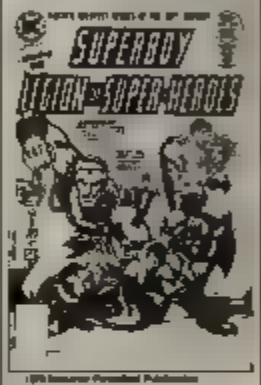
In terms of policy, the feudal editorial baronies have been broken to the extent that the artist and writer now work for the company rather than individual editors. This policy relieves editors of the burden of making sure an artist has enough work, and should reduce the possibility of personality conflicts between admittedly temperamental creators.





Vinnie Colletta, a twenty-five year veteran comics artist, is now the art director for all of National's books, and is directly responsible for seeing that each book has the necessary artists, and that each artist has a book to call home.

Both of these points are important to National's future, and Vinnie's job is a substantial one. As the company leaves between artistic and editorial, Colletta will be the engineer behind many changes in the visual content of DC's titles. New artists are being lured over from the Marvel bullpen through Vinnie's personal contacts, and the promise of more work, improved conditions are also being piloted (no pun being the



contract deals.

New three-year contracts are being offered to many artists, guaranteeing them a specific number of pages per month, at a page rate superior to freelance prices. All artwork is being returned, and both editor and artist have an editor (Colletta) should difficulties arise through misunderstanding or disagreement. There is even free cake in the conference room for snacky-bodies in the offices.

Artists and writers who actively create new characters and or series will benefit from their efforts, at least for the first issue with a special bonus. Plans now call for an extra ten dollars per page for writers on the first issue of their creation. Similar additions will of course be passed along to artists if they create series.

In the recent past, residuals will now be sent to artists, writers and inkers every time one of their old stories is published. Pencilers will receive $4.50 per page, inkers $3.00 and writers $2.00.

There is even a practice now by which artists will receive some extra money if their art work is used in any merchandising capacity involving DC comics. This means that any artwork appearing on games, dolls, toys and gimmicks will go into addition revenue for the National artist who drew it. This, and the other new policies, puts DC ahead of Marvel in their

NEWS/VIEWS/REVIEWS FROM THE WORLD OF COMICS

employee company relations for the first time in decades and will undoubtedly force similar and larger changes throughout the industry. DC is to be commended for breaking with the past so quickly and completely and for attempting to deal with their employees as people rather than xerox machines.

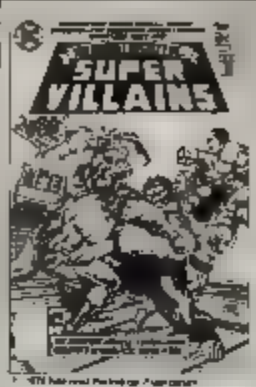
A great many improvements in National policies and employee relations are through the combined efforts of Collette Jeanette Kahn and Sol Harrison. Collette is well known for his inking abilities and while he never achieved the following of the super-slick inkers, he performed a more vital function in comics by rescuing books urned in late and inking 20-page stories over weekends. Now, in addition to bringing the artists' point of view and demands to DC's attention Collette is also inking stories at a more leisurely pace, and feels more satisfied with his new work. Vinnie is even working as a penciller on a new project about a Puerto Rican Sanpico-like character named Johnny Lopez a plain clothes detective.

Ms. Kahn is responsible for many of the policy changes in terms of generally humanizing National's hard-line approach towards its employees. (Who else would think of the cake in the conference room?) She is also taking a concerned outsider's look at the package DC produces, and making changes that are necessary but all too often overlooked by those involved simply because they are too close to the work.

Sol Harrison, who was just named vice-president of the Comics Magazine Association of America, also continues to shape editorial production and policy decisions of the company. Sol is currently working on a new promotional campaign for the comics line, personally making appearances on the radio TV talk show circuits. His most recent stint had Chicago's air waves saturated with DC dialogue.

Altogether National's President Publisher and Art Director have managed to revamp the company's image, lure new talent from their rival competitor and make a conscious effort to improve the books without the frenzied and mindless chaos that stimulated change in the past.

The immediate results of these improvements has been an influx of both ideas and enthusiasm, and the confidence that National is ready to seriously make the changes necessary for hyped sales TV projects like **Welcome Back Kotter** fade and **Super Friends** are being sought out because the spotlighted DC policies and books are not selling as well as everyone would like, and the TV shows have an important following. The increased emphasis on artists is designed to raise DC's visual content and put them in competition with Marvel in terms of attractive looking artwork and exciting packaging.



The day of the dollar comic has come via National's new '77 try-out format. **House of Mystery 01 Combat, World's Finest** and **Superman Family** are slated to be among the first to appear in this giant line-up with plans currently calling for 80 pages worth of new material per issue. According to Sol Harrison, "this will give us an opportunity to do better stories, longer ones if necessary with more character and depth."

To the average fan and collector the concept of dollar comics is both frightening and fascinating. The line of the 10, 12 15 20, and 25 cent comic has passed. Still dollar comics do indeed represent a radical increase. At current prices, we believe the average reader who buys four new books off the stands probably leaves behind a dozen or more he would have bought in the past. The publishers, with the weakest editorial content and packaging will undoubtedly take the greatest beating unless they shape up their product immediately.

On the positive side, the dollar series offers five times the pages for only three times the current price averaging about a penny a page. It's a bargain for comic readers that won't last forever, yet it represents a dramatic sales incentive that could be the shape of things to come. DC may be lucky enough to capture its readers quickly with the additional pages, but without reprints. Nevertheless, the move is a big gamble, with both publishers and consumers awaiting the outcome.

The DC Calendar will have at least one major improvement over last year's in that it will sell for one dollar less at $3.95. The theme will be monumental battles, such as the Joker and Batman struggling atop Mount Rushmore, and similar conflicts starring Captain Marvel and Shazam, and Deadman and the Spectre. The calendar will contain 14 different pieces of art by various artists, 12 calendar pages, a cover and a bonus poster of the Legion of Superheroes slugging it out with the Fatal Five.

In the comics themselves, the Famous First Edition of **Superman 1** is in the works, with a new price tag and a surprise inside. The dollar cover change has proved to be unworkable for the giant-sized series unless the page count is reduced below 56 pages. New artwork books cost even more to produce and the page count would probably slip to 40. Since **Superman 1** requires at least 64 pages to be produced in its entirety a new price of $1.50 to $2.00 will be indicated. To soften the blow there will probably be a magazine-sized section bound into the center of the book, with its own cover and featuring new material by Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster. The specific release date has not been determined yet, but it should appear by late summer or fall strategically timed in relation with the Superman/Ali giant.

In an unusual violation of the self-governing Comics Code, one of DC's romance titles will appear this fall unapproved and without the postage stamp symbol in the corner. Reason for the disapproval, is that the story is concerned not only with a rape, but also contains a few ladies of the evening in prominent roles. Not exactly your average tender innocuous National love story.

New books on the National horizon such as **Panzer, Secret, Mr. Miracle** and **Black Lightning** have been shelved in favor of the TV projects, but their release is promised as soon as production difficulties can be overcome and people found to create for them.

Shazam! will once again contain new material, written by Nelson Bridwell and drawn by Bob Oksner on the basis of the final sales from the last batch of original tales. The figures were

new thunder for shazam!

just picking up when the series went reprint so the new stories are being reinstituted. now following the TV series a little more closely Billy Batson will tour the country visiting Boston, Washington, etc. in the company of his mentor Uncle Dudley who has grown a mustache. Together they're rocking Sheena, who is up to his usual nasty tricks.

All Star's schedule will be boosted to eight times a year, and another of the Legionnaires will be promoted up his own title in light of good sales figures for the Karate Kid.

The Brave Soldiers of Victory will be reactivated with a new cast, fighting Nazis and Japs in WW II, and providing a counter to Marvel's successful **Invaders**. There are also new stories in the works for the languishing Superboy and Superstars of

mediascene

DISCOUNT POSTER SERVICE

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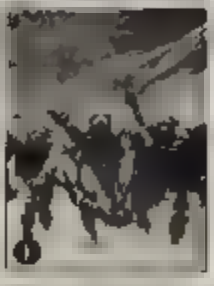
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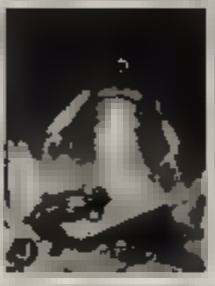
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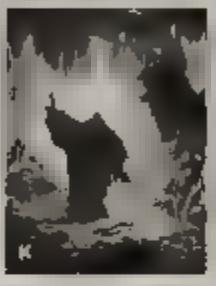
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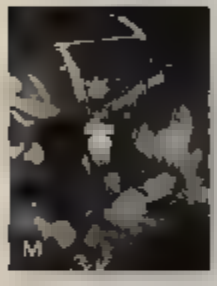
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FRAZETTA

AVAILABLE NOW IN TWO FANTASTIC VOLUMES

FANTASTIC! that's the only word that can describe this breath-taking new publication. Collectors have waited years for a high-quality book devoted exclusively to Frazetta's barbaric worlds of fantasy. THAT BOOK IS HERE. **The Fantastic Art of Frank Frazetta** is a stunning collection of art reproduced with more exciting detail and dimension than ever before—a showcase of steel-muscled warriors in mortal conflict with demon hordes, of naked enchantresses casting unfathomable spells of dark magic, of prehistoric combat between primordial man and beast in landscapes teeming with danger and sudden death. The book is an impressive 9" x 12" in size with 96 pages, all on the highest quality enamel stock—with **EVERY PAINTING** reproduced in blazing FULL-

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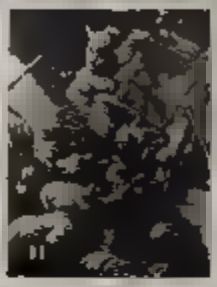

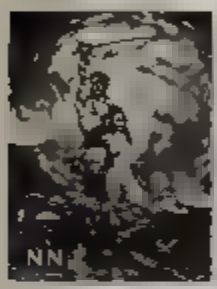

CONAN THE CONQUEROR, BRAN THE BARBARIAN, EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS' SAVAGE HEROES and a host of demons, witch-queens, prehistoric beasts and primeval warriors all come bursting to life on these sensational full-color posters. All are exciting large-scale reproductions on quality paper of the most famous paintings by renowned fantasy artist, **FRANK FRAZETTA**. If you've seen them as small paperback and magazine covers (mostly now out of print), you know their vivid color and extraordinary power. The **FRAZETTA POSTERS** are selling nationally for $3.00 plus postage of .75 or more. Now through SUPERGRAPHICS all are available at a **special discount** that will **SAVE YOU OVER $36.00**! Select one or more of the posters on this page from the DISCOUNT POSTER COUPON below. Your posters will be shipped immediately.

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COLOR. This book should sell for $25 or more (collecting examples of these works individually would cost over $100), but is available now at a fraction of that price. Imagine CONAN BRAK and EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS' IMMORTAL HEROES together in one mega color volume guaranteed to become one of the most sought after collectors' items in years. You haven't seen Frazetta paintings until you've seen **The Fantastic Art of Frank Frazetta**. $6.95 plus .55 postage. Collectors will find **The Frazetta Treasury** an invaluable addition to their shelves. Beneath its full-color covers, like a wealth of excitement — in a volume which is really THREE BOOKS IN ONE! The first section delivers an incisive revealing interview during which Frazetta discusses his painting techniques, his approach to fantasy art, his personal life and his professional aspirations. The second part runs a comprehensive check list of Frazetta's published work, an expansive reference that covers **everything** from comics and paperback covers to record jackets and movie posters. The third division contains a portfolio of Frazetta art, rare and previously unpublished drawings and paintings, including the legendary "stolen" CONAN painting published here in full color. As a special bonus, **The Frazetta Treasury** reprints an early western adventure story in addition to other full page examples of Frazetta comic art. The book contains over 60 illustrations and is printed on heavy vellum stock. Available now at $8.00 plus .50 postage and handling.

TWO GREAT NEW COLLECTOR'S EDITIONS BY THE ARTIST WHO GAVE YOU CONAN!

COMIXSCENE

Sports series and **The Flash, Superman Family** and **Legion of Superheroes** are slated to become monthly books

On the minus side of National **The Joker Swamp Thing, Tarzan, The Tarzan Family** The **Shadowhawk FLOP!** and **Four Star Spectacular** will disappear from the stands soon, and several other titles will appear less frequently **The Three Musketeers** and **Superstars of Space** are also folding due to disappointing figures

The Swamp Thing cancellation surprised many but its lengthening sales sealed its fate **The Joker** series folded somewhat prematurely though. In this series (the one script was rushed when the news came down with a storyline involving the Justice League of America Rather than write-off the script as a loss the natural solution was, of course, to use it in the JLA's own title, shortly before the book raises its price and page count

With the February issue, **The Justice League** will become the vanguard of a 50 cent line, with 36 pages of new material in a 48-page format Sales have reportedly been good for the JLA but the main reason for the price boost is said to be so that there will be a standard of differentiation between it and the **Super Friends** series which also features Superman Batman and company by Nelson Bridwell and Ric Estrada

Detective Comics is suffering from weak sales figure, with the result being a cut in frequency to bi-monthly status This is somewhat of a shock to many fans and comics creators, since **Detective** is one of the pillars of the industry with monthly publication since the early 40's

Kamandi will switch to a bi-monthly schedule shortly as National learns there is more to a Kirby creation than mimicry of previous issues A similar lack of progressive development is also forcing changes on **Kobra** constituting a fairly complete character overhaul by Paul Levitz and Rich Buckler

Tarzan 258 and **Tarzan Family 67** will be the last DC editions, and their cancellation has come about primarily because Edgar Rice Burroughs Inc has decided that they are to be solely responsible for the future of all Burroughs properties

The Tarzan comics move came in conjuction with a similar change in the Sunday newspaper strip which removed Russ Manning as the principle artist writer Manning will undoubtedly turn up on another newspaper strip or comic book soon but the news came as an unpleasant surprise to the man who has devoted the last decade to Tarzan in both the Gold Key series and the daily and Sunday strip

Burroughs Inc will be setting up their own West Coast comics company with Robert Hodes as publisher and Mark Evanier editor A **Tarzan** and a **Korak** book will be produced on a monthly basis, both 48 pages long with painted covers for 50 cents The Comics Code said will not be used, even though similar standards will be maintained in content Numbering for both books will begin with issue 1 with no advertising in the early releases Don Glut Tony Isabella and Evanier will be handling much of the writing, while Dave Cockrum Pat Boyette Mike Royer and Russ Manning reprints provide the art Some of the material to be used has already been produced for the European comics market and will turn up in early issues of Tarzan and Korak. There is also a 40-year backlog of comics and newspaper strips that Burroughs may be able to rush in to fill the breach

Should the **Tarzan** and **Korak** books succeed, there are John Carter of Mars and Pellucidar projects in the wings, along with Kerchak of the Apes

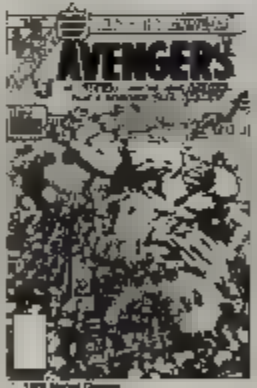
Burroughs creation of their own comics company is a pleasant surprise for most fans and an interesting blow for creator's rights The road to success if fraught with danger however particularly at this time since high prices are hurting comic book sales everywhere The Tarzan character may be in the Superman and Batman league for identification purposes, but his sales have been disappointing in the past, partially because of his illiterate movie mags There is also a distinct lack of powerhouse talent in the current Burroughs stable of artists and writers, a problem that also injured Atlas comics by preventing them from presenting a consistently exciting image on the newsstands Even with the best artists and authors success is difficult to achieve as can be seen by the 80's Tower Comics

A Marvel science fiction movies are invading the bullpen with series designs in the works or such soon to be released films as, **The Star Wars**, to be written by Roy Thomas and drawn by Howie Chaykin Logan's Run by Gerry Conway and George Pare, the previously announced **2001** written and drawn by Jack Kirby the also announced **Prisoner** the first issue of which has been done by Steve Englehart and Gil Kane but shelved and may eventually re-appear as a Kirby project, and a blast from the past in **Forbidden Planet**, written by Marv Wolfman and drawn by Dave Cockrum

That first issue of **The Prisoner** was an oddball tale which was seen in the first person through Number 6's eyes and Stan felt that its point of view was too esoteric for a first issue The plans for a Kirby takeover are very tenuous but his selection would be both inspired and exciting even if we couldn't escape as Patrick McGoohan

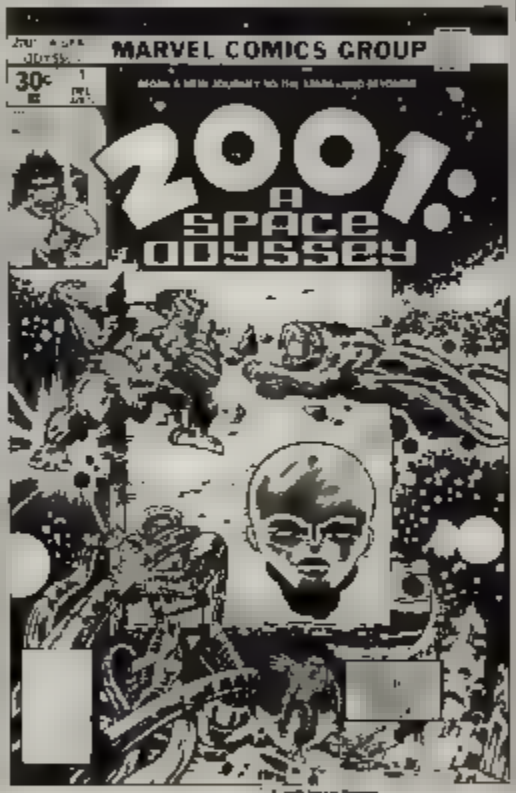
1975 Marvel Comics

1975 Marvel Comics



1975 Marvel Comics

1975 Marvel Comics



1975 Marvel Comics

1975 Marvel Comics

1975 Marvel Comics

Another project slated for takeover by Kirby is the **Black Panther** series in his own new book The first story is already in titled *King Solomon's Frog*, and features a man from the future who wears his name painted across his forehead, Match 22 The frog of the title is made of brass and is really a time-travel device which allows the Panther to meet an Egyptian Princess and a Samurai/elephant warrior villain

In **Captain America**, The Night People of Zeko Series will wind up in another dimension for three issues before giving way to a two part tale with a neo-Nazi type villain known as The Swine

eternals intro new gods

The Eternals will pause from its headlong charge of explosive action in issues 5 and 7 just long enough to lay the foundations of its modern mythologic structuring The story behind the gods Zens Mokh and their leader Zuras (spellings subject to the Kirby dictionary occupy the 4th book while the role of the humans in celestial warfare fills number seven

During the April 23rd Marvel Comics Convention, there was a very real possibility that John

NEWS/VIEWS/REVIEWS FROM THE WORLD OF COMICS

Buscema would be quitting the Marvel bullpen and taking his prodigious talents over to National. Through misunderstanding and carelessness Buscema's name was left off a contract that he and Stan Lee were to sign for an upcoming project not directly related to comics. Stan signed the contract without noticing the error and John took offense that Stan would sign such a document. For some reason, Stan and John could not get together to sort the problem out so Buscema started looking around for a more trustworthy home. Next word about the matter came when it was discovered that Buscema was in talks advantage of DC's new contract deals and would soon begin drawing Tarzan Superman and a brand-new barbarian hero. Frantic phone calls and a personal visit between Stan and John soon straightened out the matter and Buscema was back in the bullpen. While it lasted the incident shocked many both inside and outside Marvel and that it happened at all only points out the need for better employee-executive relations at all the companies.

Paul Gulacy will be bidding farewell to comics as soon as he wraps up the current Shang-Chi vs Fu Manchu basket of tales, having just completed the pencils for the third issue. Too much work for too little money is one of his basic reasons for leaving Master of Kung Fu which is understandable considering the current six-part epic contains giant ovaries, an ice crystal cavern, a city in a mountain, nuclear explosion of the moon, tidal waves, a dragon-ship fights on staircases and ever yawning chasms, and the resurrection of Fu Manchu's dear departed ancestor. Tired but still struggling, Gulacy and Moench are making this their magnum opus, and Doug promises a completely new direction for the series immediately following, with Shang-Chi (also Black Jack and Reston going freelance by quitting Smith's organization). The Gulacy-Moench team will not be disappearing however, because they will team-up on an Illustrated Fiction project in the not too-distant future.

Moench will be collaborating with Walt Simonson on a new 37-page black and white project this summer when the green-skinned Hulk gets a crack at the big magazine market in tales taking place between Hulk and his Tales to Astonish series.

Doc Savage Magazine 6 will present *The Superman Who Stole the Sky*, by Moench and Tony DeZuniga, featuring moon-gem crooks in bizarre disguises using pyramid power. Issue was to contain a story in which Doc Savage meets Manchu Fu, but the Sax Rohmer estate refused the idea so it was to be for only one story. The Savage Manchu idea has been approved however, so it is to be the ass a

for an entire series book, but that idea doesn't seem to be too contagious in light of Doc's recent sales figures.

Changes are in the wind for two other books by Doug Moench as The Inhumans and Werewolf by Night fight for their four color lives. The Inhumans will bring their current galactic war to Earth so that readers can more easily relate to the series. And the Werewolf will now be able to think coherently and change at will while wearing the hair shirt.

Kaser, Warlock, Black Goliath and Son of Satan have joined a half-dozen reprint titles in the vale of doom, as shipping notes mention their departure. The Marvel shooting are apparently limp the gap however with Dracula, Mysterious Island, The Three Musketeers, and The Red Badge of Courage on the schedule in addition Marvel will be creating all-new classics the first four concentrating on fronteers by Moench and Sonny Trinidad; Last of the Mohicans by Moench and Trinidad; Treasure Island by Bill Mantlo, and War of the Worlds by Chris Claremont.

Roy Thomas, who just returned from two Texas conventions of elbow bending with ex-Tarzan Johnny Weissmuller has made the permanent move to California. His output of titles will be unimpaired however and he's even leaving behind a couple of brand new projects via

What If..? This is a straight adventure comic narrated by the Watcher that will explore the myriad possibilities behind such divergent concepts as: What if Spider-Man had joined the FF back in the early 60's, what if the Hulk had always possessed Bruce Banner's brain, what if Bucky had not died in the 40's, what if the FF had different powers, what if Conan were walking the streets today? The list obviously is endless, and allows all of Marvel's top heroes to be used in yet another book, which should sell even more comics.

Roy will be winding up the 5-part Galactus epic in the Fantastic Four soon, with Ben Grimm regaining his Thing powers and reading immediately into a tale featuring the impossible Man, who comes to Stan and Marvel Comics demanding a book of his own. Then the Frightful Four minus One adventure for someone to join their merry troupe and hold auditions with Tigra and Thundra competing. The trick of it all is, even Roy doesn't know who's going to win the coveted (?) position. And somewhere in these proceedings, as a legacy of Roy's Texas trip, will appear the Texas Twister whose super-powers are the result of being caught in a radioactive tornado.

Marvel Premier becomes Roy's personal showcase book with issue 32 and the appearance of Howie Chaykin's Warlord. Shortly after that Roy will be writing the Thomas-Chaykin adaptation of Robert E. Howard's Solomon Kane tale Red Shadows in issues 33 and 34. Then Roy will introduce a late 60's superhero, to be followed hopefully by the three-part Mowgli the Wolf Boy. Gil Kane is illustrating the Mowgli stories, and writing the first Roy takes over the scripting of the last two parts, and only regrets that it may be six months before they see print.

There is a four-issue trial run coming up for Robert E. Howard's epic novel Almuric, and a possibility that Frank Brunner will collaborate with Roy on the last story featuring Conan as a King, The Scarlet Citadel.

savage sword super sagas

Savage Sword of Conan 18 returns Buscema to the series with the 40-page Devil in Iron, followed by the three-part Buscema job People of the Black Circle. But the real surprise for those upcoming issues is the famed Barry Smith/Tim Conrad collaboration on the Brak Mac Morn tale Worms of the Earth. The story will run in two instalments, 16 pages in issue 19, and 22 pages in 17 featuring pencils by Smith, inks by Conrad, and script by Thomas.

The Encyclopedia of Comic Book Heroes

BATMAN

The first of eight books, Volume 1 details the full and complete career of **BATMAN** in 450 8½"x11" pages, a massive research work over an inch thick! With 200 entries, 220 illustrations and almost 360,000 words it answers every question about the mysterious Caped Crusader giving all the names, dates, issues, alter egos, weapons, disguises, aides, costumes, crimes, criminals, and capers in the near-forty year history of the Batman legend. Look up "Batmobile" and find a long article containing its origins its evolution and various crime-busting gadgets. Look up "Joker" and find a complete account of one of the most nefarious careers of crime known to the comic world. The "Batman" entry itself over 90 pages long, is the definitive biography of the Midnight Manhunter. Softcover edition $9.95 plus .50 postage. Hardcover edition $15.95 plus .50 postage.

Look out! Run for cover! Hit the deck. Do anything but close your eyes because you might miss even a moment of the most rollicking and raunchy adventure strip ever created. **SALLY** is here—in a brand new book devoted exclusively to her X-rated X-ploits. Imagine **CANDY** written by Kurt Vonnegut or **LOLITA** drawn by Alex Raymond or **BARBARELLA** scripted by Henry Miller. But why imagine at all—**SALLY** is here and ready for the taking. **SALLY FORTH** is Wally Wood's most outrageous comic creation, a tour de force of the kind of **MAD** humor brawls and broads that has made his name a household word in every disreputable corner of the globe. Who else but Wood could come up with characters like O. P. Dahl, Wild Bill Yonder, Ricky McCann and Hairy James, the members of the special task force of which Sally is a bosom member? And how about General Torpor, the evil Captain Meng, Sally's Martian friend Snorky, and her feminist sister Libby? Who else but Wood could involve them all in the wildest, wackiest, misadventures this side of One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest? Who else but Wood would want to? **SALLY FORTH** is available in a new 10"x12" volume for $3.50 plus .50 postage. You'll love **SALLY**. And **SALLY** will love you too!

JACK KATZ'S FIRST KINGDOM VOLUMES 1-4

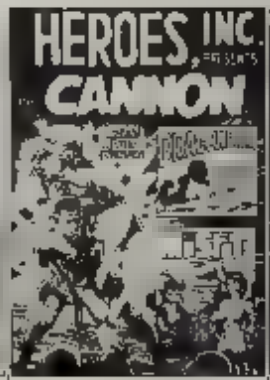
In envisioning **THE FIRST KINGDOM**, artist and writer Jack Katz has created a sweeping new mythos in the tradition of J.R.R. Tolkein, Robert E. Howard and H.P. Lovecraft. He begins the epic with world-wide destruction, and chronicles the history which follows as civilizations rise from the shattered earth. **THE FIRST KINGDOM** is populated with a legion of fantastic characters whose destinies cross and recross throughout the stories' stories which break completely from any form of previously established comic format. The opening chapters are available now in four 36-page volumes at $1.00 each plus .35 postage.

BERNI WRIGHTSON'S MONSTERS

MONSTERS is a colossal 11" x 17" volume, the size of which gives ample warning to the scope of the horrors within. Subtitled as the "Color-the-Creature Book," **MONSTERS** is really a handsome, quality printed portfolio of the gruesome and the grotesque. Each page reproduces a single fantastic illustration conjured up by Wrightson's enchanted brush, and is accompanied by an equally revolting and droll rhyme by the irrepressible Phil Seuling. **MONSTERS** is bound by full-color glossy covers and is available at $4.00 plus .50 postage. If you like horror in the old EC tradition, **MONSTERS** will scare the yell out of you!

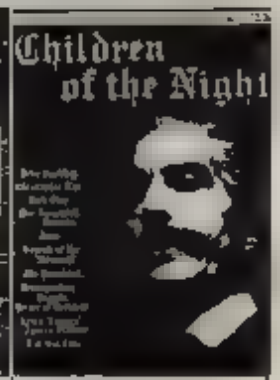
BERNI WRIGHTSON TREASURY

Here's the definitive book on the artist and his work, a 52-page volume bound beneath full-color covers. Actually three books in one, the first section is devoted to a lengthy interview in which Wrightson discusses his past, present and future in art. Section two is a comprehensive collection of illustrations culled from the earliest fanzines, right up to the present. Part three runs a complete checklist of Wrightson's contributions in every media from comics to hardbound books. As a bonus, there's a complete story reprinted from **Web of Horror** in addition to three new Cimpinini pages. $5.00 plus .50 postage.



WALLY WOOD'S HEROES INC.

Now you can own one of the rarest comics ever published! Originally produced in 1966, **Heroes Inc.** was printed exclusively for Armed Forces Distribution—**BUT WAS NEVER RELEASED!** Created by Wally Wood at his wildest with each page crackling with guns, girls and two-fisted action, **Heroes Inc.** will introduce you to Cannon, the emotionless human fighting machine; *The Misfits*, battling deadly invaders from the stars; and Dragonella, an abandoned baby who grows into a lusty, busty young girl. Available for a limited time only for $4.50 plus .50 postage.



CHILDREN OF THE NIGHT

If Hammer Films are your cup of blood and Christopher Lee and Vincent Price are the names you look for in films, *this is the magazine for you.* **CHILDREN OF THE NIGHT** features the weird and fantastic from the world of films with art, photos, interviews, reviews and articles. Issue 1 has contributions by Robert Bloch, Christopher Lee and Forrest J. Ackerman. $3.50. Issue 2 showcases Kevin Francis, Jaws, a Dracula poster by Dick Giordano and more. $2.50. **CHILDREN OF THE NIGHT** is a special magazine created for special tastes. Our supply is very limited, and will not be restocked.

NEW POSTERS

Here are the best of the artistry, horror and heroic adventure posters available on the market today! Each poster is printed in full color on high quality stock and represents some of the finest work of today's most popular illustrators and comic artists.

BERNI WRIGHTSON, MIKE KALUTA, ALEX NINO and others who have made a permanent name for themselves in the field of fantastic illustration have created the most remarkable series of posters exclusively for those whose tastes range from the weird and bizarre of H.P. Lovecraft to the ultimate epic adventures by Robert E. Howard! Each artist has searched his imagination for themes which stretch from the bottom of the oceans floor to the farthest reaches of outer space.

Some of these unique posters are brand new - others are now out of print but still available from our stock in *limited quantity*. The small black and white reproductions shown here completely fail to portray the beauty and impact of these large, full-color posters. Don't take our word for it - see for yourself!

SCARFACE DUCK
Frank Brunner
$3.00 plus .50 postage

CONAN
Mike Kaluta
$3.00 plus .50 postage

LOW TIDE
Mike Kaluta
$3.00 plus .50 postage

BATTLE BEFORE THE GATE
Steve Hickman
$3.00 plus .50 postage

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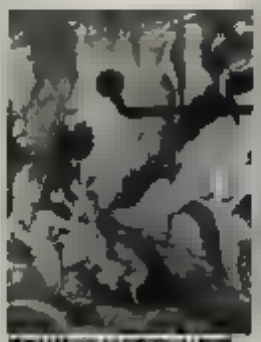

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Mike Kaluta
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Wally Wood
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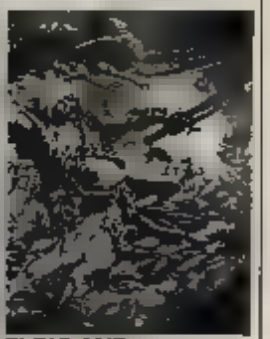


ELRIC AND THE SORCERER
Alex Nino
$3.00 plus .50 postage

COMIXSCENE

Look for what is probably Smith's most fantastic Conan illustration in **Mediascene's** forthcoming Sword and Sorcery issue this fall!

In the color Gedak comic, Ray will resolve the current Iron Book series with a confrontation between Conan, Kuh, Red Sonja, Belit, Brule and Crom knows who else. He'll follow-up with an issue by Val Mayerik adapted from a Howard story which will flashback to Conan's youth and bring a drowned man to life.

The Invaders has turned out to be a surprise success for Thomas, so much so that it is going monthly, continuing its successful team-up of Frank Robbins and Frank Springer. Interior art with Kirby covers. Issue 9, because of deadline problems, will reprint 18 pages from an old 1943 comic, gracefully introduced with 3 pages of new material.

The Invaders 11 will introduce The Blue Bullet, an Englishman who works for the Nazis. He will be somewhat vindicated in issue 12, however, as his Jewish descent is revealed, along with the fact that he was only doing it because he had a family in Germany. Along the way Union Jack's daughter takes on the identity of Spitfire so that she can help in issue 3's fight against the Golem (not the recent one) a purple Hulk-type villain.

Marv Wolfman will take over the writing of **Doctor Strange** soon and a raft of artists are scheduled to get a crack at the Master of the Mystic Arts. Rudy Nebres will take on one issue, followed by Jim Starlin who will illustrate the mystery of the Quadrennese which is edging out our universe.

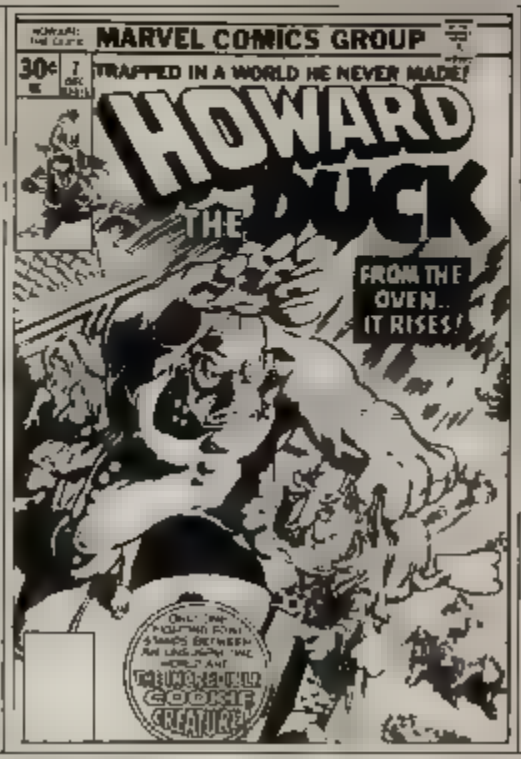
daddy drac and surfer skirmish

Dracula will guest-star Marvel's Christ figure, the Silver Surfer in pitched battle with the Lord of Darkness in issue 50 to be followed by the infestation of Blade with vampirism. Dracula 52 will introduce a mysterious stranger who will hang around till Easter and in general make the vampire very uneasy. Issue 53 is basically a lead-in to the Christmas birth of Dracula's son to be followed by further Christ allegories around the Easter season. And somewhere amidst all the action Wolfman and Colan will present the first imaginary Dracula story in the form of Harold Harold's first fiction novel about the evil Count. In the story Harold is the hero and gets the lovely Aurora Rubinowitz at the end. In addition Marv will probably be running a "Name That Kid" contest for Dracula's son and is just trying to figure out what the prize will be.

Nova is reported to be receiving a great deal of favorable mail from its premier issue and will continue the policy of one new villain per issue for awhile penciled by Sal Buscema and inked by Tom Palmer. Nova 4 will guest-star The Mighty Thor and issue 5 will pick-up on Roy's then current FF story by having Rich Ryder visit the devastated Marvel offices to shake hands with Smilin' Stan Tyrannus and his evil hordes of bublemintens will also appear in that story seeking fame and fortune through comics.

Jim Starlin will illustrate the lead story in Marvel's upcoming Thor black and white magazine adventure in **Marvel Preview**. 30 pages long, the story will be linked by Tony DeZuniga and The Tribe with a 16-20 page Hercules feature as a back-up piece. Len Wein will write the Thor novelette which will pit the Asgardian and his Warriors Three against a King Arthur type foe in a misty olde England type setting.

In the color Thor comic the



TALON THE UNTAMED IN BLAZING COLOR

Now, **Talon**, the sword and sorcery character created by Starwhu, is available as a giant 22" by 32" full-color poster. With the impact of a crushing blow from a blood-drenched battle ax, the giant figure of TALON, garbed in full barbaric raiment, strides forcefully off the center of the poster, out of a fantastic world of demons, magicians and naked slave girls right into your room. There will never be another quite like the **TALON POSTER**. Send for yours today, only $1.98 plus .50 postage. Use the order form on page 29.

GALAXY SIZED STAR SHIP CREW POSTER

Ready for a mind-blowing trip to the reaches of the far future? Then send your mind rocketing into fantastic adventure alongside the **Starship Crew**! At last, a poster guaranteed to engulf you in a galaxy of glorious mind-expanding color to take YOU boldly where no man has gone before. Designed by Starwhu, the **Starship Crew** poster is a fantastic time capsule that will give your eyes Andromeda Strain. You won't want to miss the **Starship Crew** poster, available now for only $1.98 plus .50 postage and handling.

IF YOU LIKE COMICS, YOU'LL LOVE SUPERGIRLS

They're here—a deadly dozen demure but devilish damsels in a super pin-up calendar featuring twelve of the most lurid and comic temptresses you'll ever see! We've named them **The Supergirls** because they're super-endowed, super-stacked and super-sophisticated—all drawn with tender loving care by Starwhu, who spared no effort in his relentless research on the subject. **The Supergirls**—an inspired calendar or inspired collectors item—is a giant 10½" by 15" in size, and comes in a plain brown tube for just $3.99 plus .50 postage.

X-RATED X-PLOITS OF SWEET GWENDOLYN

From out of the past comes the bizarre exploits of the 1940's underground heroine, **The Adventures of Sweet Gwendolyn**. The book features four cartoon adventure serials that read like X-rated versions of the Perils of Pauline, replete with a dastardly villain, a mysterious countess, and a secret agent—all of whom do their best to keep Gwen under wraps, be they leather rubber rope or chain—while artist John Willie did the best to save her. 140 pages, 16 in color, $12.95 plus .50 postage. You MUST be 18 to order.

LAST CHANCE TO GRAB JEFF JONES' IDYL

Who but Jeff Jones could create such a woman? Who but Jeff Jones would want to? Imagine someone who's poignant beautiful, artish, wicked, elegant, audacious, vengeful, phantasmic, amatorious, outrageous—imagine all these things and you've envisioned IDYL.

Over 40 fantastic tales collected for the connoisseur in this handsome oversized edition—a large 11" x 15" format printed offset on quality stock. The subscription of IDYL is available at $6.95 plus .50 postage. You'll find IDYL to be a mind-boggling masterpiece—but will you be too much for you to handle?

NEWS/VIEWS/REVIEWS FROM THE WORLD OF COMICS

Asgardian will once again embark on a star-spanning Odinquest aided by The Recorder in the star-spanning strip Lavalantha, on the trail of Spoor. Tony DeZuniga does the complete artwork for issue 254, with future issues returning Buscema to the strip fairly regularly.

The **Spider-Man** soap opera continues in the months ahead when the Green Goblin returns provoking a relationship between ex-dope addict Harry Osborne and Liz Allan. Meanwhile heartbroken by Peter Parker's repeated desertions and inability to satisfy her needs, Mary Jane Watson seeks comfort in the big brawny arms of Flash Thompson. This leaves poor Pete alone with his dangerous secret, that he likes to caper about New York at night in red and blue underwear embroidered in black with webbing under the arms and a mask. Unknown to everyone, a large fat man, all dressed in white and known as the Kingpin is about to molest the underwear-clad hero. A green scaled and occasionally amputated man in a Gestapo suit, known as The Lizard would also like to get his hands on the provocatively costumed Parker followed by a man dressed up like a dinosaur calling himself Stegron. Unfortunately Peter cannot find true happiness with anyone, not only

because of his peculiar nocturnal habits but also due to the fact that he must protect his kindly old Aunt May from having a relationship with a man of many parts but few scruples. A spin-off series, titled **Peter Parker, the Spectacular Spider-Man**, is planned in the months ahead.

There's another funny animal book on the Marvel horizon, but it will not be a companion to the highly successful **Howard the Duck**. Instead it will be a funny furry animal series, written by Mary Wolfman, title still undetermined.

And finally for the English Marvel Comics exclusively **Captain Britain** will soon appear written by Chris Claremont and drawn by Herb Trimpe. The series will be six pages long and will introduce color to the English books, all of which are edited by Larry Lieber who is living down his Sasboard association in relative obscurity.

The new Byron Preiss Visual Publications seem to be doing very well on the newsstands with the **Weird Heroes** series committed for at least seven issues. **Fiction Illustrated** is also doing well, with future projects including the Preiss-Ralph Reese offering 'Son of Sherlock Holmes'. Even the first **Fiction Illustrated** hero Schlomp Raven may return for those who think short.

Both Len Wein and Marv Wolfman are breaking into the non-comic writing field, courtesy of Byron Preiss new **Weird Heroes** paperbacks. Len will appear in issue 7 with **Black Shadow** a 10,000 word contemporary spy type story told in pulp-like style. Wolfman is taking over a Doc Phoenix novel started by Ted White, called *The Oz Encounter*. Wolfman has almost entirely revamped the story however so that Doc Phoenix will have something more interesting to do in Oz than follow the yellow-brick road.

And Finally the **Science Fiction Exposition** that was to be held late July at the Hilton, has been postponed until later this year. The National Democratic Convention crowds, and a pull-out by one of the backers has caused the setback of the convention, which will feature a 24-hour film show and nearly 100 guests and speakers. When it does come off, the **Science Fiction Exposition** promises to be the largest sci-fi con ever and will even encompass pulps and comics, with a special appearance by Walter Gibson and Sienkiewicz in a Shadow exhibit of paintings and memorabilia—and the recreation of the Shadow radio show.

BIG APPLE COMIX

New Yorkers are a strange breed of animal who alternately love and hate the city they've nicknamed "the big apple!" Former *Marvel Comics* staffer Flo Steinberg is one such New Yorker and as an underground comic publisher has decided to pay special tribute to her chosen city along with a dozen other notables. Together they explore a myriad of Manhattan mysteries, and one to tell it all in **BIG APPLE COMIX**, unafraid, uncensored and unashamed. There are eight million stories in the naked city and to quote **BIG APPLE** all of them are dull. YET THEY MUST BE TOLD—send a buck and see for yourself!!

DOVER SHADOW

THE SHADOW'S BACK- this time in two of his most baffling and bizarre adventures! Long out of print, these two novels are available now in a single volume, a handsome facsimile edition that recalls the color and excitement of the original pulps. In **The Crime Oracle**, the Master of Darkness battles The Head, a gruesome, disembodied spectre whose terrifying presence rules the underworld. In the second thriller, The Shadow glides through the perilous mazes of Chinatown to pull the fearsome **Teeth of The Dragon**.

TWO NEW POSTERS

We've just located two of the rarest and most unique items for the Shadow collector- a pair of posters from out of the turbulent 30's. Drawn in the style typical of the era, these striking posters were originally used to promote the master crimefighter's adventures in the pulps, and have long since been lost to the ages. Carefully reproduced on quality stock these vintage posters are offered here for the first time. Printed in midnight black and crimson red. Use the order form to get yours!

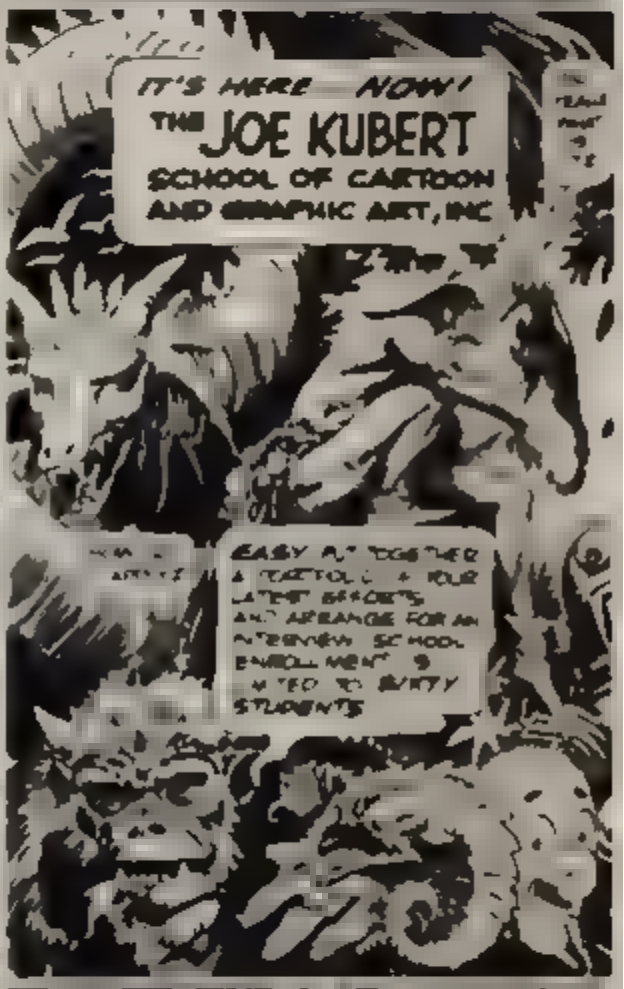
WALLY WOOD ART PRINTS

Here are four outstanding achievements by Wally Wood created just after his celebrated EC COMICS period! The pageantry of **CLEOPATRA**, the spectacle of **JOAN OF ARC**, the valiant stand at **CONCORD**, and the conflict of Claire Chennault's **FLYING TIGERS**. The exciting panorama of Wood's knights, soldiers, battles and men at war is showcased in these high-quality reproductions which have long since become rare, little known collector's items. These prints originally sold for FIVE DOLLARS A SET. Now while they last only $3.00 plus .50 postage and handling.

TARZAN OF THE APES

Tarzan! As you've never seen him before! In an all-new, 48-page, full-color hardback adventure previously unavailable in the United States. Here is the savage ape man in all his fierce glory written and drawn by Russ Manning. An all-new adaptation of **Tarzan in the Land That Time Forgot** by Edgar Rice Burroughs, this book is 8" x 11" in size, printed in England, and a genuine bargain at $6.00 plus .50 postage. You've never seen *anything* like this book from an American publisher, and we only have a limited number available, so order now.

"DO YOU MAKE UP THE STORY FIRST, OR DO YOU DRAW IT FIRST?"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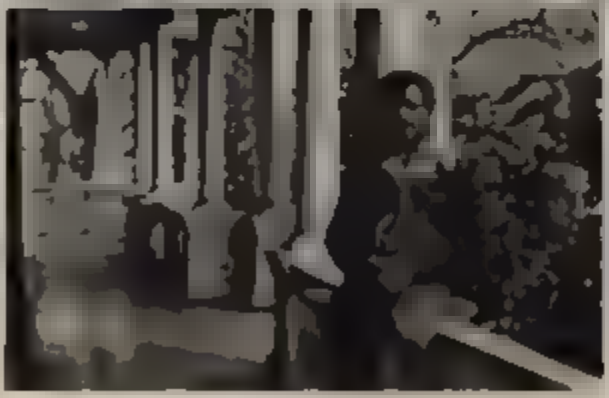

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WHAT ARE SOME OF THE COURSES?
SKETCHING... ANATOMY... STORY TELLING... INKING... COLORING... LETTERING... WRITING... COMPOSITION... REPRODUCTION, ETC.!

edge to become a part of the commercial field.

My intention is to teach a broad spectrum of those subjects essential to students desiring employment in my chosen profession. Any limitation in scope will result in an ill-equipped aspirant to a career in art. The school's instructors will be professional people, with a working knowledge of the field and its problems. Artistic incentive will be nurtured and bred in a solid, supportive foundation of creativity and understanding. The school will permit a student to acquire the widest variety of related subjects, so that upon completion of the course, the graduate will be able to select that area which interests him most in this area of graphics. For instance: in order to publish a comic book, there is a need for:

a. layouts
b. rough pencils
c. finished pencils
d. inking
e. background
f. cleanup and production
g. coloring

which is the job of the **artist/cartoonist.**

Then, there is the **letterer,** whose work involves:

a. lettering (dialogue, captions)
b. design of cover titles
c. cover lettering/logos
d. borders and balloons

These are only two of the many positions that are available in comics, for both humor and adventure strips. The same knowledge applied to comics is used in most other forms of advertising illustration. This includes:

a. TV layout
b. TV storyboard
c. TV graphic presentations for network and sponsor acceptance
d. newspaper ads
e. newspaper movie ads
f. syndicated comic strips
g. soft cover and hard cover books, covers and interior illustrations
h. commercial advertising
i. staff production jobs
j. billboards
k. brochures
l. toy design and promotion.

Other areas that are involved in the production of cartoons and allied graphics are:

a. colorist
b. color separator
c. engraver
d. writer
e. paste-up and mechanicals
f. editor

Individual grading of students will not be intra-competitive. The criteria used in grading will be one based on evaluation of the particular student's potential and ability, rather than in comparison to his fellow student. In this way, he may develop to his own potential and interests, which may deviate markedly from his classmates'. For example, one who decides on an engraving career will have interests and talents different from another who desires to draw or write, although a basic knowledge in all aspects of this field of graphics is essential to each participant's success in his chosen category.

It has been my belief that in order for an artist to be commercially successful, he should learn as much as possible about all the phases through which his original rendering must pass, before it is finally published. Since only those persons "behind-the-scenes" in publishing ever see the "original," it is much more important to know what the reproduced work will look like. A beautiful original means nothing unless a faithful reproduction can be executed. And, towards that end, a knowledge of the "reproduction machinery" is absolutely essential. Otherwise, the end result becomes a travesty of the initial concept.

In order to teach these subjects properly, it's imperative that the instruction be given by those actually involved in the profession, along with special lectures and seminars.

I've spoken extensively with members of my profession concerning the intent and direction of my school. Their favorable reactions have strengthened my resolve to have this school an accomplished fact. Many have offered their help and assistance. Among them are some of the most prominent names in my industry:

Jack Abel - cartoonist
Neal Adams - cartoonist
Jack Adler-Production Manager, NPP
Murphy Anderson - cartoonist
Ross Andru - cartoonist
Sergio Aragones - cartoonist
Harry "A" Chesler - Comic Book producer
John Costanza - letterer
Jack Davis - cartoonist, Mad, advertising
Will Eisner - cartoonist
Lee Elias - cartoonist
Ric Estrada - cartoonist
George Evans - cartoonist
Professor James Fraser - Fairleigh Dickinson University
Bill Gallo - sports cartoonist
Mark Hannerfield - commercial comic book producer
Sol Harrison - President, NPP
Irwin Hasen - cartoonist
Carmine Infantino - publisher, cartoonist
Gil Kane - cartoonist
Harvey Kurtzman - cartoonist, editor
Norman Maurer - cartoonist, movie writer/producer
Robin Moore - author
Byron Preiss - writer, publisher
John Severin - cartoonist
Dick Smith - make-up man, t.v., movies
Jim Steranko - cartoonist, publisher
Curt Swan - cartoonist
Frank Thorne - cartoonist
Alex Toth - cartoonist
Doug Wildey - TV producer, cartoonist
Tatjana Wood - colorist

Including foreign artist, such as:

Hugo Pratt - cartoonist writer
Jean Pierre Dionnet - writer, publisher
Philippe Druillet - cartoonist
Giraud - cartoonist

They will be invited (along with others) as guest lecturers at special seminars which will be held on a regular basis.

It must be understood by those who desire to enter my field of graphics, that there is a need. However, a lack of expertise coupled with tremendous talent is less useful than a moderately talented individual with a working knowledge of his craft.

THE JOE KUBERT SCHOOL OF CARTOONING AND GRAPHIC ART will be approved and licensed by the New Jersey State Board of Education. It will be a full-time, two-year school. Each year will consist of two terms, commencing in mid-September to late May. All major curriculums will total at least ten classes per week. State recognition is given on a credit hour basis, therefore students must complete a minimal number of hours per school year to be eligible for advancement. Tuition will cost about $2400.00 per year.

The first year will be one of **basic foundation and diversification,** covering the widest variety of related subjects. This will enable both student and instructor to determine interests and abilities, and act as a guide insofar as the student's choice of a major is concerned. A student must complete his first year as a prerequisite for his major course of study, which will occur in his second year.

Lecturers and guest speakers representing art agencies, art departments, typographic departments, engraving plants and a host of other commercial graphic industries will be part of a regular "in-house" program. They will also include artists and writers who will give speaker-demonstration seminars on a bi-weekly basis.

Classes will also visit printing plants, engravers, typographers, etc., during actual production. In this manner, students will become acquainted with the various working conditions under actual circumstances.

Whenever possible, and at appropriate times during their matriculation, students will participate in work-study programs. In this manner, they will gain on-job experience while attending classes.

Each year, the general public will be invited to an exhibit assembled and produced by the school's students. Representatives of the advertising, commercial and graphic industries will also be in attendance. Works by the students may be purchased directly from them at that time.

Aesthetically, the school's setting is second to none. Located in North Central New Jersey (mid-way between New York and Pennsylvania) off Route 80 and Route 46, the New York bus stops only a short distance away. The ride via express is less than one hour from the Port Authority Terminal in Manhattan.

On the school grounds, the spacious lawn boasts a most beautiful assortment of trees and landscaping, completely remote from the noise and distractions of the city.

Students seeking enrollment are required to submit a portfolio, which will be reviewed by the school's administration before final acceptance. Evaluations will be made by committee. Final decision will be at the discretion of the administration.■

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THIS IS THE FIRST ISSUE OF

It contains three lengthly illustrated pieces on Frazetta including an up-to-date interview, an article on science fiction pulps, poetry by Robert E. Howard, a feature on Hogarth's new (and final) Tarzan book, essays on Conan, Batman and Bloodaxe, assorted illustrated fiction and a new 16-page color barbarian strip by Richard Corben. **ARIEL** has 80 9" x 12" pages with exceptional printing on enamel stock and heavy covers. $5.95 plus .55 postage. **ARIEL** is the most remarkable magazine of its kind.

This is the first issue.

IT WON'T BE THE LAST!!

THE MAGIC OF FRANK FRAZETTA

This is the first and rarest of the Frazetta folios, out of print for years! We've secured a limited quantity of this publication and are making it available on a **first-come, first-served basis.** Tarzan, David Innes and a host of Edgar Rice Burroughs' heroes, villains and beasts are interpreted masterfully by the magic Frazetta pen in a series of full-page illustrations. Some of his best work. $2.00 plus .50 postage.

THE MAGIC OF FRANK FRAZETTA

MORE MAGIC OF FRANK FRAZETTA

A companion volume, similar in size and format, features a collection of Frazetta's most difficult to find work—his CONAN sketches, John Carter of Mars illustrations, men's magazine art and obscure record album covers. **After these are gone, there will be no more!** Order your copy today. $2.00 plus .50 postage.

MORE MAGIC OF FRANK FRAZETTA

FOUR MORE FOR THE FRAZETTA FAN!

For the specialist! Here's a portfolio devoted exclusively to the Frazetta woman, an unforgettable collection of females with curves in places where most girls DON'T EVEN HAVE PLACES! Full and double page-sized pin-ups make this one of the most unique Frazetta offerings yet—and are available only in this publication. $2.00 plus .50 postage.

THE SENSUOUS FRAZETTA

Frazetta's only credited syndicated newspaper strip, drawn in 1951-52. Hero Johnny Comet is a racer-do-well race driver, mechanic and trouble shooter who finds himself up to his headlights in fights, fast cars and even faster women. A very early and interesting phase of Frazetta's multi-faceted career. (ghi) line work, caricatures and sequential storytelling. Available at $4.00 plus .50 postage.

JOHNNY COMET

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Subscriptions that have expired are indicated by a blue line running through the right side of the mailing label. In addition, each issue is stamped with a notice indicating that issue as the final one of the subscription. Keep count of your issues so you'll know when to reorder.

Wait until your current subscription runs out before renewing it, otherwise your reorder may be too early, resulting in a duplication of an issue or two. Upon receiving your expiration issue, subscribe immediately so you won't miss an issue!

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Supergraphics guarantees satisfaction to all mail order items offered for sale in this issue. Should you need to write us concerning an order, send your letter to **SUPERGRAPHICS CONSUMER SERVICE DEPT./BOX 445/WYOMISSING PA / 19610.** Please include all details including dates, items involved, and xerox copies of checks or money orders. The matter will be handled immediately to your satisfaction. Please remember mail sometimes takes 4 or more weeks for delivery AFTER our processing. Also, **MEDIASCENE** is a bi-monthly publication, so allow up to 12 weeks for first subscription copies to arrive.

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○C	○N	○BB	○MM
○D	○O	○CC	○NN
○E	○P	○DD	○OO
○F	○Q	○EE	○PP
○G	○R	○FF	○QQ
○H	○S	○GG	○RR
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DOC IS BACK!

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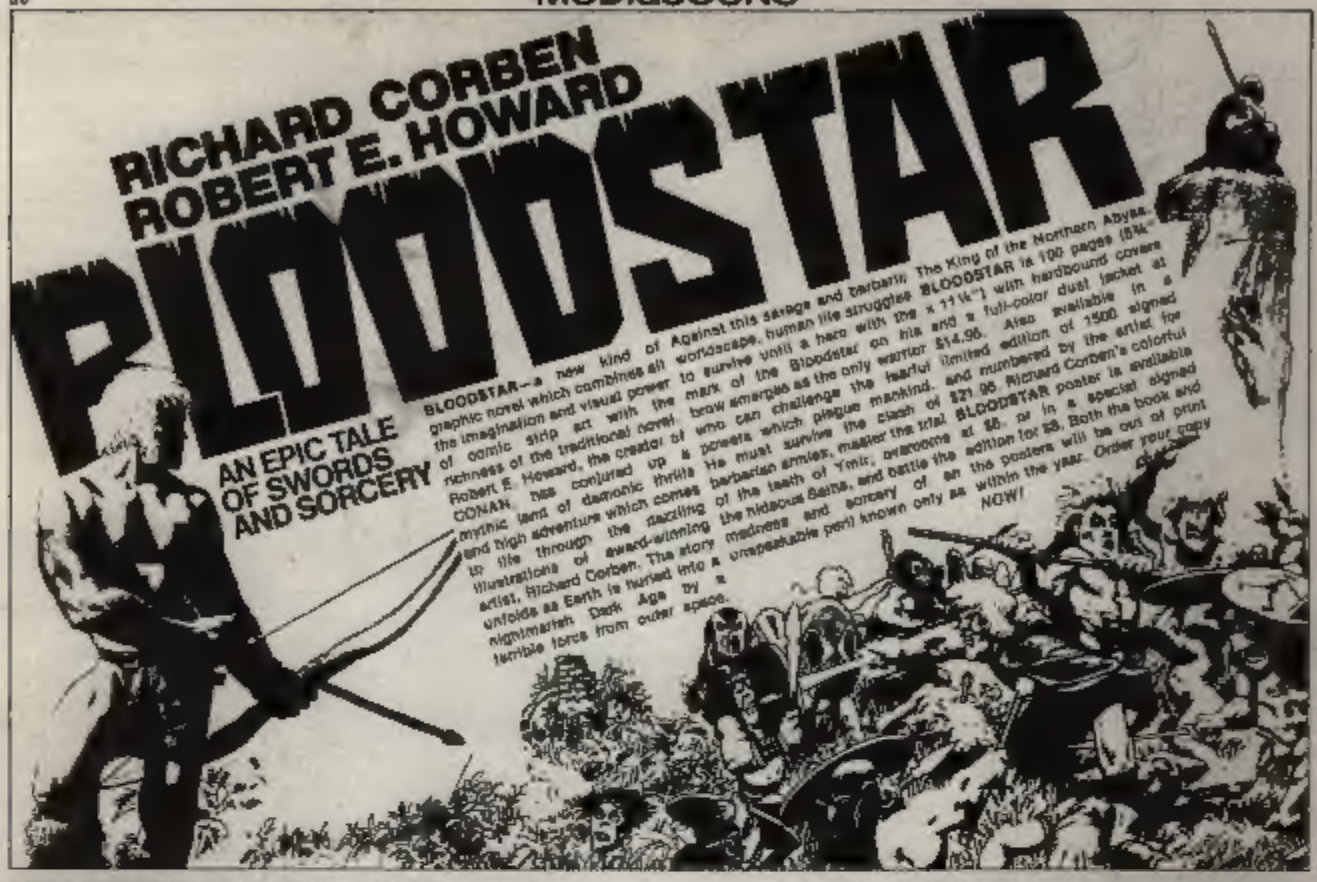

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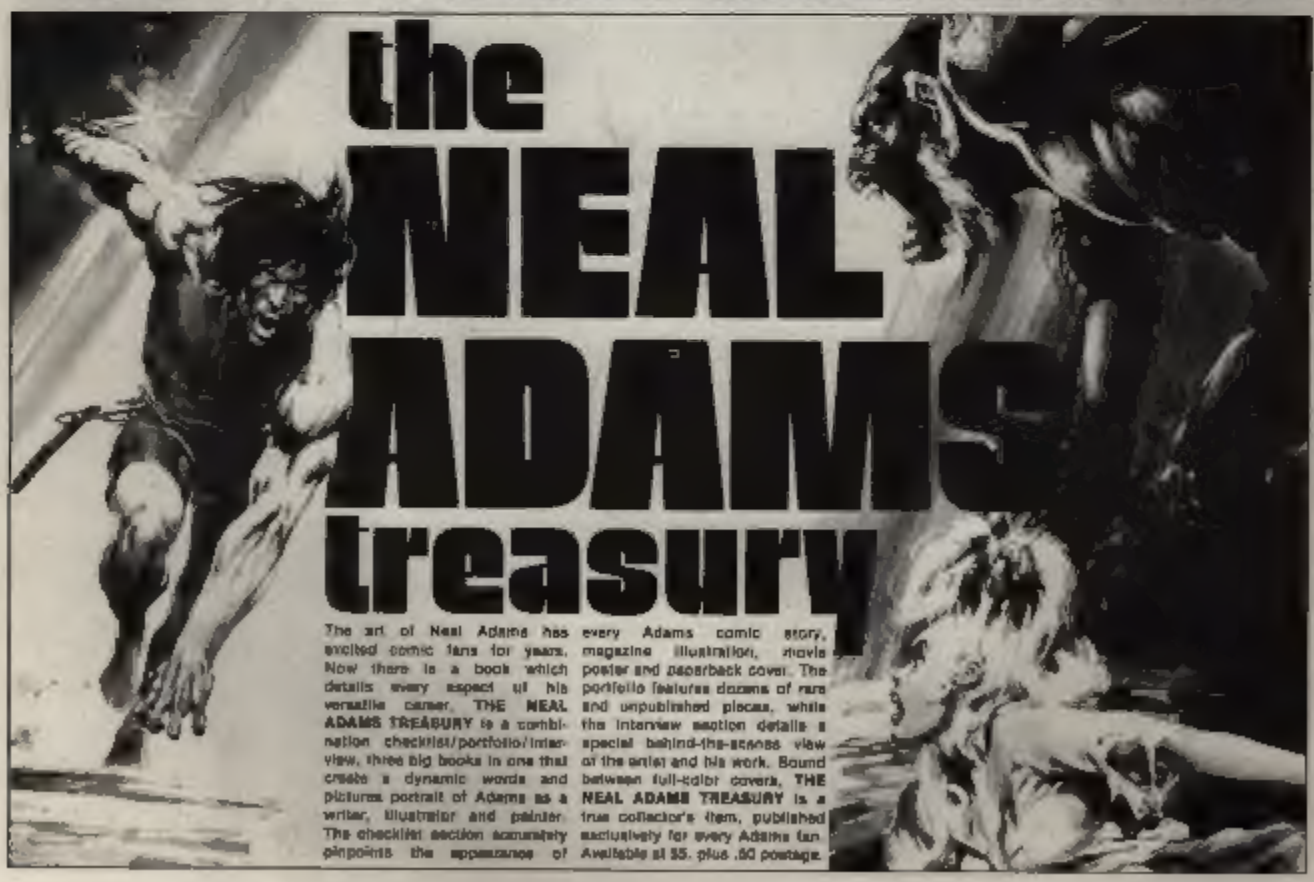

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